SPECIAL EDITION

CLASSIC ROCK

LEGENDS OF THE

'80s

STARRING

MAIDEN
DEF LEPPARD
BON JOVI
GN'R
VAN HALEN

FROM AC/DC TO ZZ TOP

INSIDE STORIES FROM ROCK'S MADDEST DECADE...

Digital Edition

FUTURE

FOURTH EDITION

I was nine years old when the 70s became the 80s. It was a golden age for pop music. The first no.1 single of the new decade was from some hot new band called Pink Floyd. They had a song with a disco beat, a chorus guaranteed to be sung in playgrounds across the country, and a video that showed school kids being turned into minced meat. Welcome to the 80s!

We got an education alright, whether we needed it or not. Every week, the charts were full of bands that looked and sounded different – a calvacade of weirdos with great tunes. Madness, the Specials, The Jam, Ian Dury & The Blockheads, The Police, Adam & The Ants and more. I sometimes think it was the greatest time in history to be a music fan because not only did we have a genuinely exciting new music scene, we had all that old shit to discover too!

Personally, everything changed for me in 1983, when I was 12. David Bowie released *Let's Dance*. My older sister had a boyfriend who was a Bowie fanatic. She brought home the *Changes* albums, then *Ziggy Stardust, Hunky Dory, Aladdin Sane* and *Low*. And when we'd exhausted those, we moved on to related stuff too: Mott The Hoople's *Greatest Hits*, Lou Reed's *Transformer.* By the time I had my own money, I'd go to Glasgow and blow it all in the Virgin Megastore, coming home with *Heroes* and *Raw Power*, and new stuff that couldn't have been made without those records: Bauhaus, the Bunnymen, Flesh For Lulu, The Sisters of Mercy. I joined a band. Our guitarist started out playing Big Country licks, and then discovered some guy called Hendrix. The drummer was a Bonham nut. We hung around with goths, mods, punks and metalheads – it was us against the rest of a world that had gone Stock-Aitken-and-Waterman mad.

Heavy metal had been reinvigorated by punk. Iron Maiden and Motörhead took that energy and injected it into old school rock to make something more streetwise and exciting – and then thrash metal took the marriage to its logical conclusion. Van Halen inspired a new generation of LA rock bands who liked Dave Lee Roth's showmanship and Eddie's guitar pyrotechnics. The new pop production methods infected everyone from the giants of AOR to Bon Jovi, as rock musicians beavered away in the studio to create, in Def Leppard's memorable phrase, "the rock *Thriller*".

Ironically 'the rock *Thriller*' had already been made in year one of the decade: AC/DC's *Back In Black*, the 2nd best-selling album of all time. And that is where our story begins…

Scott Rowley,
Content Director

FUTURE

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Bookazine Editorial
Editor **Alex Burrows**
Designer **Brad Merrett**
Compiled by **Philippa Grafton**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**
Editorial Director **Jon White**

Classic Rock Editorial
Editor **Siân Llewellyn**
Art Editor **Darrell Mayhew**
Content Director (Music) **Scott Rowley**
Head of Design **Brad Merrett**

Photography
All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**

International
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com
www.futurecontenthub.com

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Matthew Eglinton**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely, Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman**

Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

Classic Rock Legends of the '80s Fourth Edition (MUB4173
© 2022 Future Publishing Limited

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this bookazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The paper holds full FSC or PEFC certification and accreditation.

All contents © 2022 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

FUTURE
Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

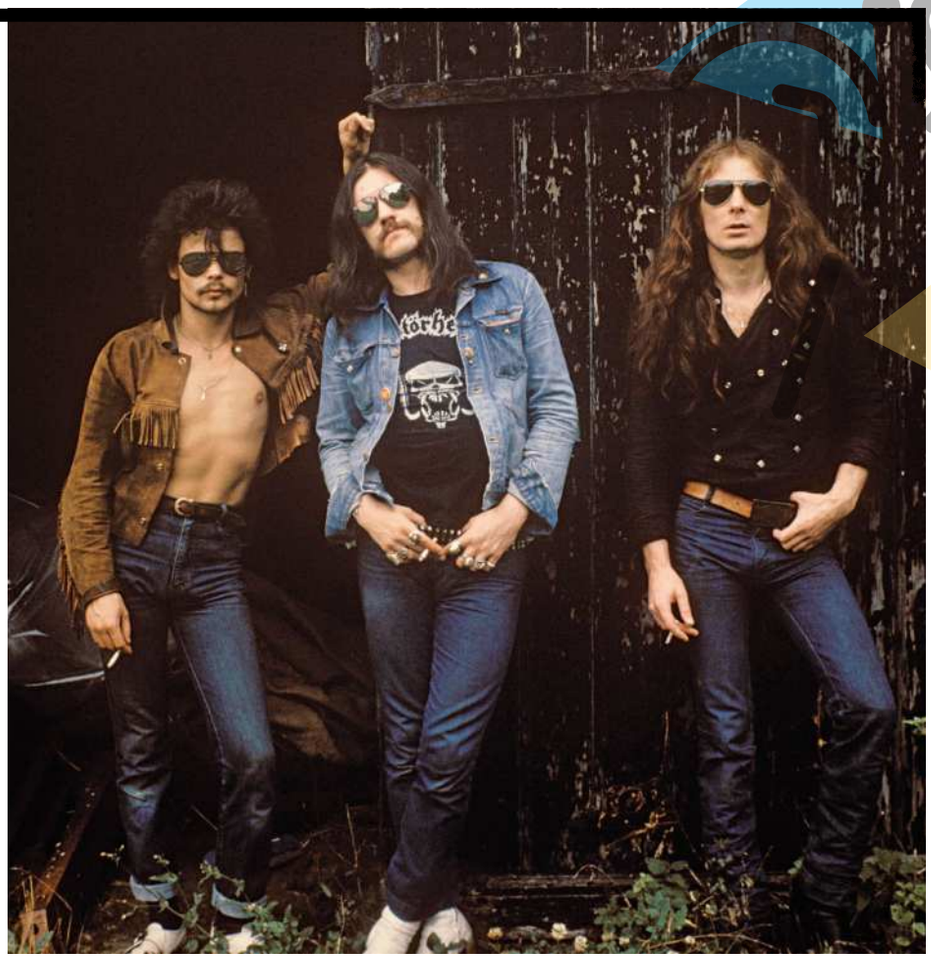
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

Part of the CLASSIC ROCK bookazine series

Widely Recycled

ipso. For press freedom with responsibility

Contents



GETTY X2

Features

8 AC/DC
At the start of the 80s, it looked all over. Bon Scott was dead and the band on a low. But *Back In Black* and Brian Johnson changed everything.

14 Judas Priest
Already a well-established heavy rock outfit in 1980, but songs likes *Breaking The Law* found them a whole new audience.

16 Whitesnake
The ultimate 80s big hair and big song outfit. Their classic self-titled album of 1987 summed up 80s hard rock. Here's the story behind it.

20 Diamond Head
Along with Iron Maiden, Saxon, et al, Diamond Head were at the forefront of NWOBHM. Here's the story behind the influential *Am I Evil?*

22 1980
The start of the decade saw a host of new bands influenced by punk as much as hard rock: here's how heavy metal evolved...

30 Motörhead
Perennially mistaken for a metal band, Motörhead "are rock'n'roll" – as the late, great Lemmy stated nightly. This is their signature track.

32 Dio
He took over from Ozzy in Black Sabbath, then quit and started his own band. How did the legendary Ronnie James Dio own the 80s?

36 Toto
Against the odds, prog was still going strong in the early 80s and AOR was gaining ground. Toto were in both camps and *Rosanna* was one of their most popular tracks. Here's its full story.

38 Iron Maiden
From grotty punk-metallers to stadium world-beaters, the 80s made the Irons. This is the story behind the making of their classic 1982 album, *Number Of The Beast*.

44 Faith No More
Punk to funk: Faith No More were something original and fresh in the rock scene and it wouldn't be long before they took over. Here's the story behind their massive hit *We Care A Lot*.

46 Van Halen
Diamond Dave and co were the masters of 80s Spandex-wearing, guitar squealing shiny and polished rock. And the enormous global sales of their album *1984* proved it.

55 100 albums of the 80s
It wasn't all about metal y'know. The prime cuts of the decade that supercharged classic rock.

76 Thrash
Faster, dirtier and uglier than metal so far, Metallica, Megadeth, Anthrax and Slayer – and a host of others – took metal to its extreme.

84 Def Leppard
Sheffield's favourite sons had no trouble breaking the USA, but the UK were sniffier about their polished mainstream rock. Nevertheless, the Lepps made the 80s their own decade.

96 Bon Jovi
Their third album *Slippery When Wet* spawned four hit singles and the band became superstars. This is the story behind their rise to fame.

104 Skid Row
Youth Gone Wild may be one of the most memorable and enduring rock tracks of the 80s. Here's how it was made.

106 Bruce Springsteen
The boss started the 80s with *The River*, delivered *Nebraska*, then *Born In The USA* ,and ended it on *Tunnel Of Love*. What a decade.

116 Mudhoney
Grunge started here. Chaotic, lo-fi and amateur – but with its roots in classic rock – *Touch Me I'm Sick* heralded punk's second coming.

118 Gun N' Roses
Released in 1987, *Appetite For Destruction* was a slow-burner that didn't properly explode until 1988-89. Here's how those two years nearly killed the band.

126 Dinosaur Jr
*"So f**ked I can't believe it" Freak Scene was* the perfect fullstop to the insanity of the 80s – by a 70s classic rock influenced alt. rock band still in their infancy, but pointing the way forwards for the 90s.

On tour in the UK, 1981.

RIGHT: ROSS HALFIN. LEFT: GETTY

"WHAT? DO I WANNA JOIN AC/DC?"

One minute, washed-up former rock star **Brian Johnson** was running his car-repair business on Tyneside, the next he was in the Bahamas with Angus and co. recording what would become the biggest-selling rock album ever: *Back In Black*. Words: **Paul Elliott**

It was in March 1980 that Brian Johnson got the phone call that would change his life. A new decade had just begun, but Johnson had little cause for optimism. At 32 he was feeling washed up. Recently separated from his wife, Johnson was living at his parents' house in Gateshead, running a small car-repair enterprise and struggling to get by. His days as a rock'n'roll star had long-since passed.

In the early 70s Johnson had lived the dream. As the singer with glam-rock band Geordie he was Newcastle's answer to Noddy Holder, a working-class hero with a Jack The Lad charm and a voice like the foghorn on the Tyne ferry. Geordie had enjoyed a decent run: they were signed to EMI and had a Top 10 UK hit in 1973 with the foot-stomping anthem *All Because Of You*. But, unlike Holder and Slade, Geordie were never really cut out for the big league. The hits dried up, the band lost their record deal and, after some lean years playing working men's clubs in the North East, they split up.

"When I left Geordie," Johnson recalls, "I was completely broke. I had nothing. And I had two kids and a mortgage to pay. I was driving a VW Beetle that was 14 years old. I was fuckin' skint."

In the late 70s Johnson had scraped together just enough cash to start up his own business, fixing windshields and fitting vinyl roofs on fancy sports cars. It just about paid the bills, and was partly a labour of love: Johnson had been "nuts about cars" since he was a kid. He was also making a little money on the side – just beer money – with a new version of the old band, christened Geordie II. Only this time there were no delusions of grandeur.

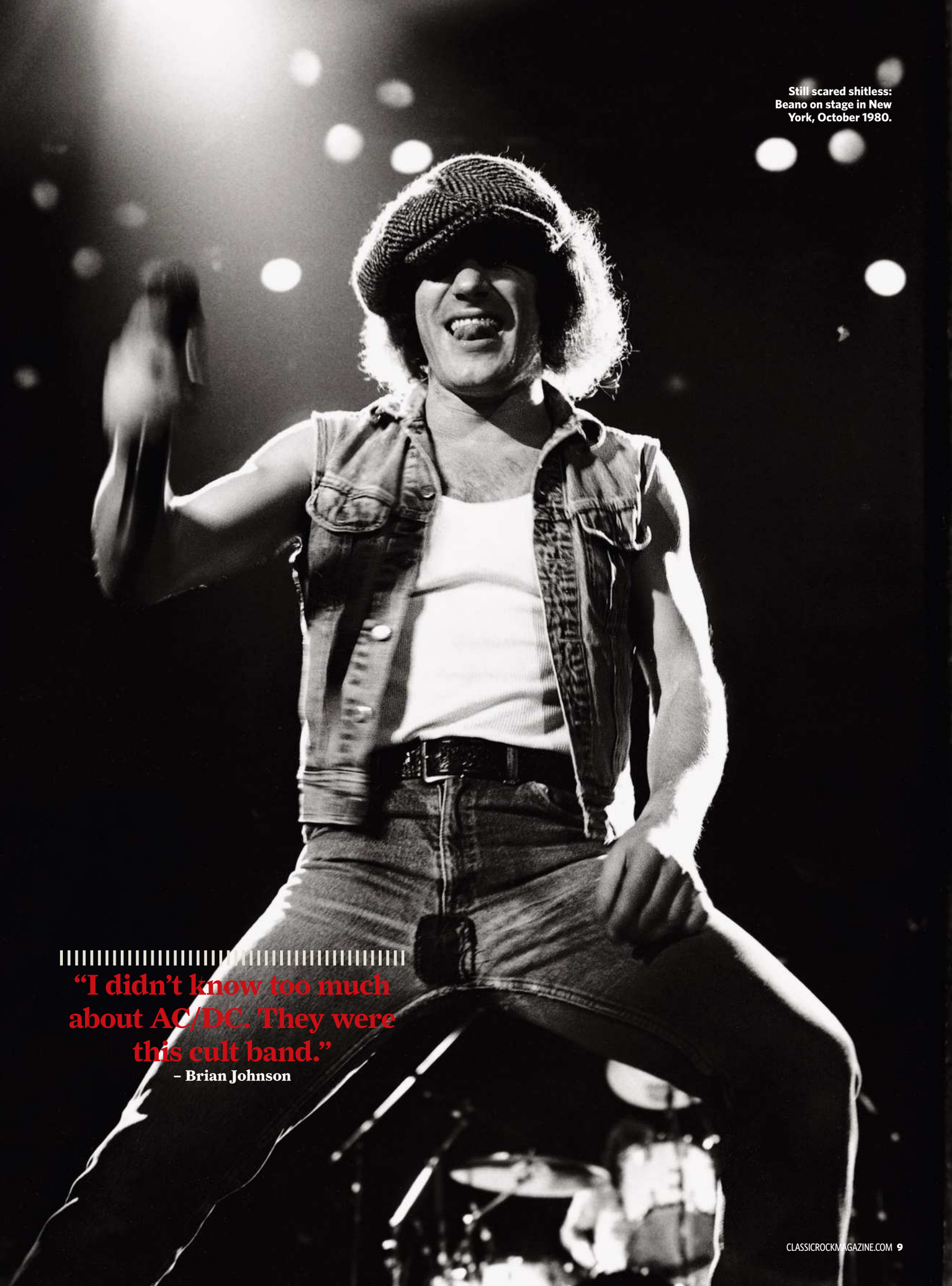
"It was a cracking little band," Johnson says, "but we were never gonna make it as a recording act."

Brian Johnson was no fool. He knew there were few second chances in rock'n'roll, and so he treated Geordie II as merely "a bit of fun". The band's live show had a touch of cabaret about it – "We did a lot of comedy in there, cos the boys were very funny" – but they could rock too. And there was one song that was always guaranteed to get their audiences jumping – a song by an Australian rock band called AC/DC that was making a big noise in the late 70s.

"I didn't know too much about AC/DC," Johnson admits. "They were this cult band. But everybody was talking about them – I mean *everybody*. We used to play *Whole Lotta Rosie*. And we'd always save it for last, cos the place would go crazy!"

Brian loved singing that song. He still loved being up on a stage. But he wasn't kidding himself. "I was old. Shit, I was 32; I'd passed my sell-by date."

Then came the phone call that would change everything. A woman with a German accent told Brian that a band was auditioning for a new singer, that he had been recommended, and that auditions were being held in London. Brian asked for the name of the band. He wasn't going to travel all the way to London without knowing who he was auditioning for. When she said she wasn't



Still scared shitless: Beano on stage in New York, October 1980.

"I didn't know too much about AC/DC. They were this cult band."
– Brian Johnson

permitted to tell him, he suggested she gave him the initials of the band's name. There was a pause.

"Okay… it's A, C and D, C."

Until the morning of February 20, 1980 AC/DC had seemed unstoppable. In the seven years since the band were formed in Melbourne, they had built a huge following throughout the world. Led by guitar-playing brothers Malcolm and Angus Young, and fronted by boozy, charismatic singer Bon Scott, they were widely acknowledged as the most electrifying rock'n'roll band on the planet.

At the turn of the 80s, AC/DC were on a roll. Their album *Highway To Hell* was certified gold in the US with sales of half-a-million copies, and in the first week of February the single *Touch Too Much* became their first UK Top 30 hit.

Then on February 20, after a night out with friends in Camden, north London, Bon Scott was found dead, later declared "death by misadventure" by coroners. He was just 33. Bon's death devastated his bandmates. Angus reflected: "When you're young you always feel immortal. But after Bon died I felt horribly grown up."

It was at Bon's funeral (on February 29, in Fremantle, the suburb of Perth where he had grown up) that the surviving members of AC/DC decided their future. Bon's father Chick took Malcolm Young to one side to offer some words of encouragement and to give his blessing for the band to carry on without his son. It gave them the lift they needed. "Bon would have done the same," Angus said. "We felt we had his blessing too."

After the funeral, Angus, Malcolm, bassist Cliff Williams and drummer Phil Rudd flew back to London, where they lived apart in small rented flats. For a couple of weeks they remained in mourning. "We were still real low," Malcolm said. "We weren't snapping out of it." Then, at Malcolm's insistence, he and Angus began writing again. "It was the two of us," Malcolm recalled. "Pick up the guitars, just for therapy. Maybe that's the way to get through this." At the very least, they wanted to finish what they had started with Bon.

A couple of new songs had been written just before Bon's death. One was based on a stop-start riff that Malcolm had written during a soundcheck on the last tour. The other was recorded as a rough take with Bon on drums; Bon hadn't finished any lyrics. But as soon as the new songs started coming together, in mid-March, Malcolm and Angus felt it was time to find a new singer.

It wasn't going to be easy – for the band or for the singers who would be trying out. Bon was a one-off, a huge personality and the epitome of rock'n'roll cool. To Malcolm, Bon was a talismanic figure. "He pulled us all together. He had that real stick-it-to-'em attitude. Bon was the single biggest influence on the band."

How would AC/DC replace a man considered by many to be irreplaceable? To Angus, the answer was simple. "Bon was a unique character," Angus told *Sounds* magazine in March 1980, as auditions for a new singer began, "and we wouldn't like to have someone who was a Bon imitator. We're looking for something that little bit different."

Angus also acknowledged the problems facing potential candidates: "It's difficult for any guy to walk in knowing that Bon's just died, and probably thinking that we're all going to be a bit funny about a new guy singing his songs. That's added pressure."

But, as Angus indicated, there was a change of mood in the AC/DC camp. With strong new material written, and with auditions under way, AC/DC were looking forward, not back. "We'll certainly do our best to put out a great album," Angus said. "And if someone walked in tomorrow and clicked, we'd go straight in and record it, cos we've basically got all the ideas and songs. It just needs that one missing ingredient."

Brian Johnson didn't know it at the time, but he was always the favourite for the job. "My name was on the list up front, but they just couldn't find me," he explains. "I'd fallen off the end of the world, nobody knew where I was."

It was Bon who first told the other guys in AC/DC about Brian, having seen a Geordie gig in the North East of England. He later told Angus that the singer in Geordie had done the best Little Richard impersonation he'd ever seen – he was rolling around on the stage, screaming his head off. "It was rare that Bon ever raved about anything," Angus said. What Bon didn't know was that after that show, Brian was rushed to hospital with appendicitis. He'd been screaming because he was in agony.

Following Bon's death, an AC/DC fan contacted the band's management to recommend Brian. "It was a guy from Cleveland," Brian recalls. "He sent a Geordie album to them with a letter saying: 'You've gotta listen to this guy.'" And, as Brian later discovered, the producer of *Highway To Hell*, Robert John 'Mutt' Lange, was also aware of Brian. "Mutt had said to the guys: 'Listen, there's one guy you should really listen to.' And I think it was Mal who said: 'That's twice his name's come up.'"

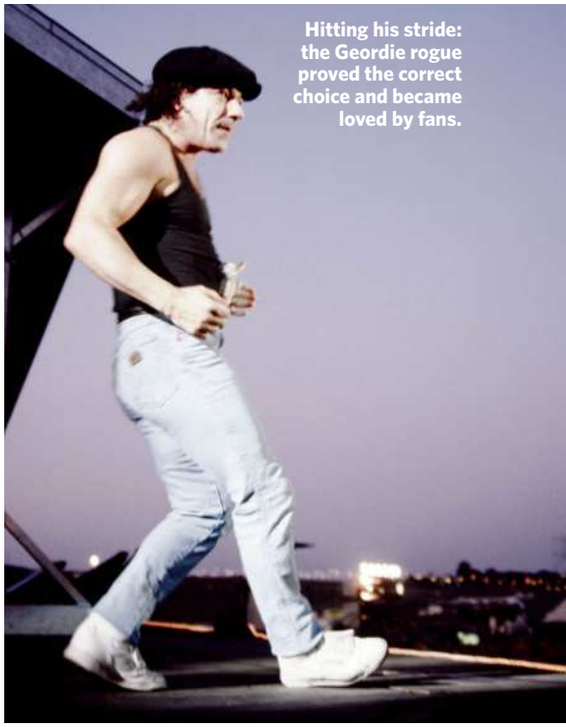
AC/DC's management were instructed to trace Brian. But when they made the call, he remained hesitant. He admits: "I'd been bitten once by the music industry, and I didn't want it to happen again." In the end, he only agreed to audition for AC/DC when another job in London, for a jingle, fell into his lap. "I wasn't gonna do it," he shrugs, "but a friend of mine, Andre, phoned us and said: 'Brian, I have an advert I think would suit you fine. It's £350.' That was a big lump of money. It was a proper job, for Hoover. And I thought, hang on, I could probably go down and do the AC/DC thing on the same day. I just thought, I hope I get this ad thing. Because Andre did tell us: 'There's this big, black soul woman, it's going to be you or her that gets it.' I went: 'Oh Christ!'"

The day Brian travelled to London, the omens were not good. Fearing that his clapped-out Beetle wouldn't make the trip, he borrowed a friend's car, a Toyota Crown. Just a few miles outside Newcastle he got a puncture. "I just went: 'Oh, fuck!' But the strength you had then…" He worked like a maniac to fix the flat tyre, then floored the Toyota down the M1, arriving just in time to meet Andre at the studio in North London. Brian sang the jingle – *'The new high-powered mover from Hoover, it's a little groover!'* – and the £350 was in the bag.

But when he got back in the car and headed across London for his appointment with AC/DC at Vanilla Studios in Pimlico, his confidence evaporated. "I was sitting in this little café just across from the studios and, God, it was miserable. I wanted to go home. I was too nervous to go over there. I just thought I hadn't got a chance of getting the gig, because they don't know me, really. I thought, gosh, they'll be looking for somebody with the long hair, it's not gonna work. Plus they're a young band. I remember getting this pie and a cup of tea, and I couldn't eat the pie cos the fuckin' crust was too hard! I was starving. And I just went: 'Oh, bollocks, better make a move.' I got up and walked across the street. And that was it. That was me changed after that…

"I just remember the lads had been waiting there for quite a while for us, they'd been in that studio a long time, auditioning singers. They were just great. I'd never met such a bunch of non-prats! They were just regular guys. As soon as I walked in I just felt comfortable. Malcolm came over and

Jonno was gonna need a big drink after that first live show. And this was it.


Hitting his stride: the Geordie rogue proved the correct choice and became loved by fans.

THIS PAGE: (TOP) ROSS HALFIN X2, (BOTTOM) GETTY

AC/DC's *Back In Black* platinum party gig, New York. Other "non-prats" just out of shot.

"When you're young you always feel immortal. But after Bon died I felt horribly grown up." – Angus Young

said: 'There you go, mate' – and gave me a bottle of brown ale. He said: 'You must be thirsty.' I went: 'You know what? I could just kill this right now!' And I did – boy, did I!"

Once the formalities were out of the way, the band asked Brian what song he'd like to sing first. Brian suggested *Nutbush City Limits*, the early-70s rock/soul classic by Ike And Tina Turner. "It was brilliant!" he says. "After we did it I was smiling, and they said: 'That was a breath of fresh air, mate!' Everybody that had come in before me had gone: '*Smoke On The Water*?' And the boys were like: 'No, not again!'" Then came the real test, the clincher. They tried *Whole Lotta Rosie*. "I got tingles singing …*Rosie*," Brian says. "I had a lucky day, you know?"

Phil Rudd would later state that after that first audition they were sure they'd got their man. But Brian returned to Newcastle none the wiser. Even when he was summoned back to London for a second time he was still uncertain. "They asked us down again and I said: 'Guys, I cannae be doing this. I got a shop full of cars up here.' And I did! But I went down in the end." The second audition passed smoothly, but again the band remained tight-lipped. "I stayed at a hotel overnight with Keith Evans, one of their roadies," Brian recalls. "Keith was going: 'I think you've got it, mate.' I said: 'Nah, I think they're just making their mind up.'"

It was a few days later that Brian received a call from Malcolm Young. "I'll never forget it," Brian smiles. "It was my father's birthday and I'd been playing pool at The Crown pub. I went back home but there was nobody in the house, mum and pop had gone out somewhere. And the phone rang and it was Mal. He said: 'We got an album to do, we gotta leave in a couple of weeks, so… if you're set for it…' I said: 'Are you telling me I've got the job?' And he went, 'Oh yeah.' I said: 'I tell you what, mate, I'm gonna put the phone down. Could you ring again in 10 minutes just so I'm sure that it's not somebody takin' the piss?' And he went: 'Yeah, sure.' And he phoned back, on the dot, and says: 'So, are you comin'?' He still wouldn't say it! Mal's not like that. 'Well, are you comin' or what?' And I'm like: 'Shit, yeah!' I put the phone down – I didn't want him to hear this – and I went: 'Whoah! Fuck!' I'd bought me pop a bottle of whisky for his birthday present and I just opened it up and took a big swig of it. I was so excited, but I didn't know who to tell. There wasn't anybody *to* tell!"

On April 1, 1980 – six weeks after Bon Scott's death – AC/DC announced Brian Johnson as their new singer. Brian had been itching to tell his younger brother, but when he did his brother just laughed. He thought it was an April Fool's joke.

"The worst thing was to tell the band I was in," Brian admits. "After I got back from the first audition, we were doing a show one night and I told them I went down to London and I had a sing – that's what I called it, 'a sing' – with AC/DC. They went: 'Did you?' I said: 'Aye, they were in the studio and they're auditioning down there and I went and had a sing.' And they went: 'Oh, right. Anyway, what are we doing first tonight?' They never thought anything of it. So later, when I knew I'd got the job, we were playing just west of Newcastle in a working men's club, and afterwards I said: 'Guys, I've got some news. I hope you're happy for us, but I've been offered this gig with AC/DC.'"

Brian's first press interview as AC/DC singer was with *Sounds*. He spoke candidly about his hopes and fears. "I still don't know quite where I am," he confessed. "All I know is there's a stack of work to do and the rest of the band have still got to find out about me. I'm still scared shitless, really!"

Brian wasn't the only one feeling the pressure. As he explains: "The band weren't in the best financial state at the time, cos the album before, *Highway To Hell*, had cost so much money."

In London, the new-look AC/DC worked quickly to finish writing the new album. "When I went in, the guys had some titles for songs but no lyrics," Brian says. "A couple of titles came from the lyrics I wrote later on. But it's hard to remember, because it was a blur. They didn't even know what my lyrics were gonna be like. Literally, they said: 'Can you write some lyrics for us?' I said: 'I'll give it a shot!'"

In late April, with nine tracks completed, the band and producer Mutt Lange flew to the island of Nassau in the Bahamas to record the new album at Compass Point studios. As engineer Tony Platt explained, living and working on a remote island helped to "bring everyone together".

The first song recorded set the tone for the album. The funky riff that Malcolm had been playing around with on the *Highway To Hell* tour had been fashioned into a crunching anthem

titled *Back In Black*. The lyrics were a statement of invincibility and a salute to Bon. *Back In Black*, said Malcolm, was AC/DC remembering "the good times" they'd had with Bon. It was a theme they picked up on again with *Have A Drink On Me*, the song they'd cut as a demo with Bon on drums. The lyrics (*'Whisky, gin and brandy/With a glass I'm pretty handy'*) were a drunken toast from Brian to his predecessor. And Brian also proved that, like Bon, he had a way with a double-entendre: on *You Shook Me All Night Long* he joked: *'She told me to come but I was already there.'* He says now: "I thought I'd gone too far with that, I must admit, but nobody seemed to mind. There's a lot of lovely ways you can do things."

There were times, however, when Brian struggled with lyrics, notably on *Hells Bells*, the mighty epic that ended up as the first track on the album. The riff – dubbed "ominous" by Malcolm and "mystical" by Angus – called for a heavy opening statement, but Brian just couldn't find the words until he experienced something akin to divine inspiration.

"I was just sitting on my bed one night," Brian recalls, "and these bedrooms were just breeze-block cells with a bed and a table with a light on it and a toilet. That was it. I was sitting there wondering how good it had been. Cos we were doing it so quick, Mutt would never let me listen to what I'd done because we had to get the guys in straight away. There was no luxury of sitting around thinking, nothing like that. Then Mutt came in and said: 'Are you all right?' He was a wonderful man; he knew the pressure I was feeling. I thought: 'Phew!' I'd already written three songs and it was day after day. I'm going: 'I'm fucking running out of ideas here…'

"Mutt says: 'Tonight we're gonna do *Hells Bells*, Brian.' I'm thinking: Hmm… *Hells Bells*, right. I'd just done *Back In Black*, so I thought: 'Can it get any moodier?' And then, right at that moment, there was a tropical thunderstorm the likes of which I'd never seen before. Mutt said: 'Listen… thunder!' And I said: 'That's rolling thunder, that's what they call it in England.' He says: 'Rolling thunder – write that down.' And this is true – it went 'boom!' The fucking rain came down in torrents, you couldn't hear yourself. And I just went: 'Pourin' rain!' And the wind whipped up – 'I'm comin' on like a hurricane!' I was gone. The song was ready that night. I hadn't even heard the track cos they were busy doing it. It was whacked down in the greatest haste."

At the end of their fifth week the band had nine tracks were in the can. They needed one more to finish the album. Malcolm and Angus wrote it in 15 minutes.

"I thought it was just gonna be a boozy chuck-away," Brian admits. "Mal came up with the title, saying: "Ere, Jonno, we'll call it *Rock And Roll Ain't Noise Pollution*.' I thought: 'Eh?' There's a great one to fucking rhyme with!

"I'll never forget the start of it. I went into the recording booth, the intro starts and I hear: 'Brian, it's Mutt. Could you say something over that? Just talk.' I was smoking a tab at the time and you can hear it. I was going: 'Yeah, all you middle men.' I just did this southern preacher thing. Honestly, it was one take. I never ever thought that it was gonna be on the record."

With recording completed, Malcolm Young travelled to New York with Mutt Lange and Tony Platt to mix the album while the rest of the band headed back to London. "I never heard the finished album 'til two months later," Brian says. "But when I did I was knocked out. I couldn't believe it was that good… A wonderful album, full of surprises."

Most surprising of all was the first sound on the album, added at the eleventh hour: the portentous tolling bell for *Hells Bells*. The idea had come to Malcolm when he'd nipped out for a piss during mixing at New York's Electric Lady studios. Tony Platt dashed across the Atlantic to record a bell at a church in Loughborough. But the bell tower was home to dozens of pigeons that flew noisily from their roost each time the bell was struck, thus ruining Platt's recording. Thinking on his feet, Platt commissioned a custom-made bell from a specialist foundry in Leicestershire and recorded that.

But the end result was worth the trouble. The slow tolling of the bell – spookily, it strikes 13 times – added to the dramatic effect. In addition, the album's all-black cover design fitted the mood of a band that was emerging from the darkest times. In some quarters at AC/DC's record label, Atlantic Records, there was resistance to the black cover, but the band wouldn't yield. The cover was a memorial to Bon. And that was that.

Back In Black was released on July 21, 1980, five months and one day after Bon Scott had died. Within two weeks it topped the UK chart. And in the US, after a slow start, the album was certified platinum in October, when it began an incredible 13-month residency in the *Billboard* Top 10.

Back In Black not only resurrected AC/DC, it took them to a new level, elevating the band to superstar status and transforming Brian Johnson from has-been to hero.

For Brian, the greatest tribute came when AC/DC returned to Australia at the end of the *Back In Black* tour in February 1981. After their gig in Sydney, Bon Scott's mother, Isa, told him: "Our Bon would have been proud of you, son." And when he got home to Newcastle there was another moment to savour. After years of driving old bangers, he finally got himself a flashy motor.

"I treated myself to a Chevy Blazer," he laughs. "It was an SUV – four-wheel drive. It was black-and-white – I was in Newcastle, after all. I'll never forget, my next door neighbour, he always used to smirk at what I did; he got a new Cortina every four years. And my Chevy was gorgeous!

I remember him going: 'That's a big, daft, stupid bloody thing, isn't it?' I went: 'You jealous, mate?' I was dead pleased. It was a big, daft, stupid thing, but I didn't care. I knew I'd made it."

Thirty years on, *Back In Black* is the biggest-selling rock album of all time, with worldwide sales now at a staggering 49 million. Its success is all the more amazing given the circumstances in which it was made. But as Malcolm Young said: "We meant it. It's real. It's coming from within and was made from what we'd all gone through. That emotion on that record… that will be around forever."

"It's funny," Brian says. "My daughter phoned me the other day and said: 'Dad, I just wanted to say I'm so proud of you.' I said: 'What?' She said: 'All these years you've just been my dad' – she's never been an AC/DC fan, she's just a regular good girl and all that. But she said: 'I just didn't realise how brilliant this album is!' She said her new favourite songs are *Shoot To Thrill* and *Let Me Put My Love Into You*. I said: 'I'm pleased you finally got it! How old are ya?' She says: 'I'm 36 now, dad!' I said: 'You're older than I was when I did it!'"

Back In Black was the album that saved AC/DC's career. Guns N' Roses guitarist Slash even went so far as to say it "saved rock'n'roll". Not only is it the greatest comeback album of all time, it's also arguably the greatest rock album ever made.

"The whole point of that album was to celebrate Bon's life," Brian says. "The boys had lost a great friend and a great singer – a pal. They'd gone through all their shit together. He wasn't just a singer in the band, Bon, he was their best pal."

During the making of *Back In Black* there were times when Brian felt Bon's spirit with him. "I feel soft saying it," he admits, "but I was worried. Like, who am I to try to follow in the footsteps of this great poet? Cos Bon really was a kind of poet. And something happened to me – a good thing."

What Brian Johnson and AC/DC achieved with *Back In Black* was little short of miraculous. But as this most unassuming of rock stars concludes: "I don't think I could have done it unless it was those particular four boys. If it had been four other gentlemen I don't think it could've happened. This is a special band. They do something to you."

> "The whole point of that album was to celebrate Bon's life. The boys had lost a great friend and a great singer – a pal."
> **– Brian Johnson**

After taking a sabbatical from touring, BJ is rumoured to back in the band for their forthcoming follow-up to 2014's *Rock Or Bust*.

GETTY

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE GREATEST ALBUMS EVER MADE

Discover 146 pages of classic albums reappraised by rock's greatest writers and ranked according to votes cast by Classic Rock magazine's readers. Did your favourite make the cut?

ON SALE NOW

FUTURE

Ordering is easy. Go online at:

magazinesdirect.com

Or get it from selected supermarkets & newsagents

Judas Priest

Breaking The Law

The riff is a belter, the lyrics arrived "out of thin air", and the promo video for it is pure pantomime – the story behind Beavis and Butthead's favourite Priest song.

Words: **Dave Ling**

Breaking The Law, a song performed countless times around the world in such sun-kissed places as Rio, Texas and Honolulu, began its life on a drizzly day in a farmhouse in Staffordshire, when Judas Priest guitarist Glenn Tipton got the idea for the song.

While Priest were working on their 1980 album *British Steel*, Tipton took the basic framework of the song to his writing partners – vocalist Rob Halford and guitarist KK Downing – who helped with the final arrangement's balance of crunching guitars, metronome drums and bellow-your-lungs-out chorus.

"It turned out to be one of the all-time classic metal riffs," Halford says, casting his mind back. "As I recall, the bulk of the song was conceived when we were at Ringo Starr's old house, recording the album. Great as the music was, the lyrics had their place. And they just arrived out of thin air. Breaking the law: where on earth did that come from? I haven't a clue. But it tapped into an angst that Priest had never really covered until that point."

Nevertheless, Halford easily immersed himself in the hob-nailed boots of the song's desperate lead character, relishing the prospect of roaring: *'You don't know what it's like/You don't have a clue/If you did you'd find yourself/Doing the same thing too.'*

"We all came from tough working-class backgrounds; Walsall and West Bromwich were pretty bleak parts of Birmingham in those days," he offers. "We could all relate to the need and the want of trying to break out of an unpleasant cycle."

Ringo's aforementioned gaff, Tittenhurst Park, was previously owned by John Lennon, and his *Imagine* was recorded in its White Room. Priest and producer Tom Allom had rowdier things in mind, including making use of various on-site props during the sessions. It was Allom's idea to smash a milk bottle and mix it in alongside a police siren. "We threw bottles against the wall after we'd had a few," Halford chuckles. "We used a billiard cue as scythes, and rattled trays of cutlery in *Metal Gods*, also slapping a piece of microphone cable for whipping sounds."

It was Columbia Records who suggested *Breaking The Law* should be the second single from *British Steel*. The label also agreed to finance what turned out to be one of the most comical heavy metal videos of all time. "We were delighted when the song kicked up enough dust for them to take it to the next level," Halford recalls of what became Priest's joint-highest-charting single in the UK (along with *Living After Midnight taken* from the same album).

In the ludicrous, Julien Temple-produced video Priest dress up as vicars and attempt to rob a bank, using guitars as weapons, and making their getaway on the flyover past what was then Hammersmith Odeon.

"MTV was just about to become enormous, and we understood that enough to make use of it," Halford says. "If we'd stuck with the song's exact lyrical content for the video it'd have fallen flat on its face."

Because of its crossover appeal and oldschool metal credentials, *Breaking The Law* is the one Judas Priest song that just about every metal fan knows. Halford insists that he's comfortable with the band being most famous for one of their more pantomime moments. "Poking fun at yourself has always been a very British way."

Having sung *Breaking The Law* on and off for the past 24 years, nor has he become even remotely sick of it. "No, never at all," he says, dismissing the very suggestion. "Every night it's a tiny bit different to any other, and I still get a massive adrenalin rush on hearing those twin guitars fire up. It's also a great crowd participation number. Everyone's had a confrontation with a copper and likes to scream about breaking the law, don't they?"

Those who have covered the song include Therapy? (Rob: "Sorry, I've not heard their version"), ex-Warlock singer Doro Pesch ("I can really imagine her belting it out") and the San Francisco-based gay heavy rock band Pansy Division. "I know all about that because I performed it with them on stage at a Gay Pride gig in San Diego. Chris Freeman [bassist] is a friend of mine and they're wonderful little band. It's my hope that because we now live in a little more enlightened climate, people will give them a chance."

Next up for Judas Priest are some soonto- be-confirmed summer festival appearances, and beginning the writing process for a follow-up to *Angel Of Retribution*, a reunion album released back in 2004.

"We've already put bits and pieces together and will soon be setting our noses to the metal grindstone again," he concludes. "Hopefully it'll be yet another metal masterpiece. But I wouldn't yet like to speculate about a release date."

PRIEST FROM THE VAULTS

Breaking The Law is among the definitive moments of a vintage concert video that arrives in DVD format on March 13. Shot at the Mid South Coliseum in Memphis, Tennessee in December 1982, *Live Vengeance '82* was released on video as *Judas Priest Live* and also included as part of 2004's *Metalogy* boxed set. Not to be confused with the recent reunion DVD *Rising In The East*, its 95 minutes capture Judas Priest on the *Screaming For Vengeance* tour and at their peak in the US "It's as an important part of our history as the *Unleashed In The East* [live] album," Priest frontman Rob Halford says. "With its lasers, costumes and enormous stage set, it makes you feel like you're back in the 80s again. Priest fans will love it. Watching the two DVDs back to back, I get excited not only be being in this band but also by being a fan of it."

On yer bike: Priest strike their classic stage pose.

GETTY X2

Judas Priest frontman Rob Halford in full flight.

"It turned out to be one of the alltime classic metal riffs." – Rob Halford

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
June 1980

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
Breaking The Law reached No.12 in Britain; parent album *British Steel* peaked at No.4.

PERSONNEL
Rob Halford
Lead vocals
Glenn Tipton
Lead guitars
KK Downing
Lead guitars
Ian Hill
Bass
Dave Holland
Drums

WRITTEN BY
Tipton/Halford
Downing

PRODUCER
Tom Allom

UK LABEL
Columbia

FACT
It was reported that the master tapes for *British Steel* had been reported stolen from a New York studio and that a ransom of £50,000 had been issued. It was all a publicity stunt. But the band were not amused. "We... told management we didn't need that kind of press," Glenn Tipton said in 1980. "Seeing it in the papers, we were sick."

The Cov: Whitesnake frontman and 80s rock star for the ages.

YEAR OF THE SNAKE

In 1987, legendary British rock outfit Whitesnake – headed up by Yorkshire gent and ex-Deep Purple frontman David Coverdale – received huge international acclaim for their self-titled album which sold over eight million copies in the USA alone. Here's the full story of how it became a bonafide rock classic.

Some people seem built for stardom and, more than that, for the certain kind of life that it brings for them. David Coverdale was a natural for it, you could see it in him. He was good-looking, charming to an absurd degree and he could really sing. Yet for some reason, for a long time his career seemed to be unfolding in reverse. He'd gone straight from a boutique in Redcar into Deep Purple, skipping out all the usual stages of flogging up and down the motorway in a drafty Transit to arrive immediately in a place where life was featherbedded and insulated, where the world knew his name. But from this rare start, Coverdale slowly worked his way backwards down the trail.

The musicians who joined him in the early years of Whitesnake were great players, but they weren't stars in the way that Ritchie Blackmore had been, or that David Coverdale had been. Micky Moody, Bernie Marsden, Colin 'Bomber' Hodgkinson, Neil Murray and lots more [Coverdale has always been a man unafraid to administer a revolving-door policy] were elements of a highly workable British blues-rock band, one that filled respectably sized halls across Europe and occasionally enlivened *Top Of The Pops*. And yet, and yet… surely there had to be more to the talent and ambition of Coverdale than that? Because the man was truly blessed, with the looks, with the charm, with the voice…

The fork in the road, when it arrived in the mid-1980s, came just in time. Since leaving Deep Purple, Coverdale had made two solo records and then six with Whitesnake. He would be one of the oldest men to flourish in an era bookended by Bon Jovi and Guns N' Roses – he turned 36 in the titular year of 1987, conceding more than a decade to the likes of Jon Bon Jovi, W Axl Rose and Bret Michaels; he was two or three years older than the long-established Eddie Van Halen and David Lee Roth. He occupied a kind of middle ground between the old and the new, and when he caught the wave, he was making the most of what was probably his final chance.

There was evidence that Coverdale was changing too. "Me and David weren't friends and co-writers any more," said Micky Moody, who had played guitar in Whitesnake since 1977, and who exited the band soon after *Slide It In* was recorded in 1983. "David never said anything to me. He just didn't socialise with me any more. David was a guy who, five or six years earlier, was my best friend." Moody may well have had a grievance, that's for those who were there to know. What's undeniable is that the band had shifted, both in personnel and sound, with Moody identifying drummer Cozy Powell's more direct rock style as the root. "We weren't the same band any more," he said.

While his ultimate reinvention as an English gentleman rock star in America was still some distance away, the change in Whitesnake's music was subtle but apparent. Where they were once a blues-rock band, they had edged their way towards something more expansive and appealing – commercial hard rock with an authentic blues edge. *Slide It In* almost realised that vision, especially with the excellent *Love Ain't No Stranger*, but it was a transitional record. The version issued in the US, which featured re-recorded guitar parts by Moody's replacement John Sykes, was slicker, louder, more dynamic, and of course, more American.

Sykes, who looked as well as played like a guitar hero, would draw out a side of Coverdale's personality that had been slowly absenting itself through the grittier Brit years of the band. They formed a writing partnership straight away, and the last of the old skin was shed: Mel Galley, himself a replacement for Bernie Marsden, left after breaking his arm, Cozy Powell was supplanted by Aynsley Dunbar, once of Journey. The new Whitesnake would be an image-conscious, televisual rock band, built for arenas, not halls. The music Sykes and Coverdale were writing was lascivious, hard-pumping and saucy, raunchy as well as soulful, and the sound was nailed by Bob Rock, who had brought a similar clarity to the early clatter of Bon Jovi.

The key song was a giant knee-trembler called *Still Of The Night*, constructed around a *Kashmir*-style Sykes riff ["I almost fell off the bed laughing," Jimmy Page was reported to have said on hearing it for the first time] but while *Kashmir* had its po-faced mysticism, *Still Of The Night* was a priapic statement of intent, a new vibe for a new era. About such a beast could a hit record be built, and it was: there was plenty of horn-doggin' blues – *Bad Boys*, *Give Me All Your Love* – plus a softer sister for *Still Of The Night* in *Crying In The Rain*, and some bold and glistening chart rock – a re-tuned, hard-edged *Here I Go Again*, plus *Is This Love*, a ballad once intended for Tina Turner that offered David plenty of room to smoulder. There was filler too – rare is the Whitesnake record without it – but even that was superior filler like the rambunctious *Give Me All Your Love* and the wrought *Straight For The Heart*.

It was to be a studio-only creation. After Coverdale became afflicted by a severe sinus infection that delayed its release by almost a year, Sykes was out [apparently, as one story had it, after suggesting that Coverdale find a replacement for himself to complete the record] and the touring band was

Yes, you may well smirk. David in 1987 with girlfriend Tawny Kitaen.

GETTY X2

Coverdale was a rock star reborn: not a fake snakeskin or drainpipe in sight.

SNAKE SECRETS

Still Of The Night is said to have had its very early roots in a song demoed by Coverdale and Ritchie Blackmore while they were in Deep Purple.

Coverdale was the only member of Whitesnake to survive the recording process. John Sykes, Neil Murray and Aynsley Dunbar had all been replaced by the time the band went out on tour. Guitarists Adrian Vandenberg and Vivian Campbell overdubbed solos on radio mixes of the singles *Here I Go Again* and *Give Me All Your Love* respectively.

The famous video for *Here I Go Again* has been parodied several times, notably by the animated TV show *American Dad!*, and in the films *Talledega Nights* and *Death Proof*.

The Cov: fashion is temporary, class is permanent.

GETTY X2

rounded out by gorgeous, pouting Adrian Vandenberg and the rougher-hewn Vivian Campbell. They were a pair aware of their place in the grand scheme. With a killer commercial record in the can, there was room for only one star, and that was David Coverdale. What a vision he was: hair newly frosted, shirts slashed open, neck and arms smothered in bangles and charms, not a fake snakeskin tie or a drainpipe jean in sight, he was a rock star truly reborn.

Nothing was left to chance. With America something of a clean slate for the band, the album was left without an official title. It was the European edition that became known by the year of release, and that arrived with a different running order [the US version begins with *Crying In The Rain*, rather than *Still Of The Night*].

It was also the MTV age, and Whitesnake exploited it brilliantly, almost brutally. Their formula was simple and timeless: Coverdale pouted and looked soulful while pursuing a spectacularly beautiful woman who happened to be wearing not very much at all. Tawny Kitaen was a former girlfriend of Ratt's Robbin Crosby – she appeared on the cover of Ratt's *Out Of The Cellar* album – who was trying to carve out a film career in movies such as *Bachelor Party* and *Witchboard*, but whose big break was to come without her having to speak a word. Clad in a white negligee, she cartwheeled across the bonnet of a car and imprinted herself – and Whitesnake – on the collective consciousness. In tandem with the song that sent her bonnet-wards, the pumped-up, newly urgent *Here I Go Again*, Tawny Kitaen set in motion a new, parallel narrative in the Whitesnake story. She and Coverdale became involved romantically, a development tracked across a couple more videos. Here were an apparently perfect couple engaged in a very modern love story. How could they, or the entity that they had come to embody, possibly fail now?

Coverdale's public persona, wrapped up a little in his relationship with Kitaen, was also carefully cultivated. He put across an exaggerated vision of the English gent in repose. I remember interviewing him once in London when he appeared wearing jodhpurs and shiny riding boots. He coupled the look with a fruity speaking voice and a *Carry On* sense of humour that both set him apart and exempted him from the wilder excesses required of Guns N' Roses or Poison. It was a clever exaggeration of his character that allowed him to keep a portion of himself to himself. It also set him apart from the times. Coverdale has always been viewed as a singer first and rock star second, and in the deal with the devil that stardom so often becomes, he retained enough of himself to avoid being trapped in one particular era.

The heavens aligned for Whitesnake in 1987. It was a case of right band, right record, right time – just in time. America took to it right away. It reached number two on the Billboard chart on release, and the singles *Here I Go Again* [No.1] and *Is This Love* [No.2] kept it there while the units progressively clicked up towards eight million. Europe fell on the back on it, the debt acknowledged with two extra tracks added to a special-edition release, *Looking For Love* and *You're Gonna Break My Heart Again*.

There was fall-out, of course, over the next few years. Campbell left, Vandenberg sustained a wrist injury and Coverdale chose Steve Vai as a new partner, a brilliant player – yet one surely too far removed from the roots of the band. The next record, *Slip Of The Tongue*, copied the formula but lacked the guts. Coverdale and Sykes had something special going; regrettably it proved fractured beyond repair. David and Tawny didn't quite last the course either, divorcing in 1991. The era had proved transient, its unions unsustainable, but while they lasted, Whitesnake touched some gloriously OTT heights. Boys, it was blast.

Jon Hotten

Big hair-off: Whitesnake at the 1987 MTV awards.

DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT...

A swift internet trawl reveals that everybody reckons Whitesnake's *1987* is one hot potato...

'Love or loathe it, the genre of hard rock – or, if you prefer, hair metal – was huge in the 1980s, and thanks to Sykes and Coverdale this is the definitive album of that era.'
– *Review on Amazon.co.uk*

'If you listened to the radio in 1987, you heard *Still Of The Night*. This lead single captured the US market almost single-handedly. I remember the first time I heard the song, I was floored. How could something sound so big?!'
– *Heavymetaladdiction.com*

'If you were conceived sometime around 1987, there's a distinct chance that a paternity test might reveal some Coverdale in your family tree.'
– *Globaldomination.se*

'It was 1987, it was *Still Of The Night*, and from that moment on, I was hooked. Rock music would go on to dominate my life, and Coverdale and his band of merry men would always hold a special place in my heart.'
– *Rocktopia.co.uk*

'The recording is power-drenched, the band and production sound light years ahead of most other releases of the time, and this album is noteworthy not only for the blistering feel of the tracks but also for the blend of ballads and rockers.'
– *Sakalli.info*

'The synchronicity of an album loaded with some great classic rock anthems that are as vital today as they were when they were first released, arriving during an era fuelled by music videos and the monster promo MTV was at that time, proved an irresistible force that could not be ignored.'
– *Hardrockhideout.com*

'Fans of Whitesnake both old and especially new embraced the album with open arms as it went on to become a multi-million-selling success in the US.'
– *Sleazeroxx.com*

Head and shoulders easily the best rock album of the 1980s.'
– *Review on Play.com*

Diamond Head

★AM I EVIL

It took a year and a half to write, but this metal epic launched Diamond Head, and inspired another band that went on to become one of the biggest on the planet.

WORDS: GREG PRATO

DID LARS JAM WITH THE 'HEAD?

Lars Ulrich was at many a Diamond Head gig during the early 80s – he even crashed in the homes of both Brian Tatler and Sean Harris for a period. Ulrich was also at several 'Head rehearsals at the time.

Which leads one to wonder: did the future Metallica drummer ever jam with the band, or even mention a desire to give it a go himself?

"He didn't say: 'I'm a drummer' or 'I'm going to form a band,'" Tatler says. "He didn't say anything like that. If I picture myself hanging with a band that I like, I probably wouldn't have the nerve to say: 'Let's have a go on your guitar.' He probably was slightly in awe and thought: 'I ain't got the nerve to sit on the same drum stool as Duncan [Scott] and take over.'"

The New Wave Of British Heavy Metal certainly spawned its fair share of anthems during the early 80s – Maiden's *Running Free*, Saxon's *Wheels Of Steel* etc. One gem that tends to get overlooked is Diamond Head's mighty epic *Am I Evil*. In fact, some believe it's a Metallica song, due to that band having covered it on their 1984 EP *Creeping Death* and have played it live regularly ever since.

According to Diamond Head co-founder/guitarist Brian Tatler, back in 1980 a lot of work and planning went into the making of what became a metal classic.

"I can remember wanting to write a song heavier than Black Sabbath's *Symptom Of The Universe*," Tatler recalls. "So when I came up with that riff, I think we all said: 'That's good. We should work on that.'

"The song evolved over a period of 18 months. We seemed to keep adding to it. We added the fast section, and then I must have come up with the intro – which was kind of based on *Mars* from *The Planets* suite [an orchestral work by Gustav Holst] – and that got sewn onto the beginning. I can remember coming up with the ending, and the very last thing to be written was the guitar solo section, where it changes key, and the tapping. I think we started it around 1978 and finished around 1980, when we went in to record the album [*Lightning To The Nations*, 1980]."

To match Tatler's heavy riffing, singer Sean Harris came up with the suitably dark lyrics, which included the most extreme opening of any metal song up to then: '*My mother was a witch/She was burned alive/Thankless little bitch/For the tears I cried*.'

"'*My mother was a witch*' was a great opening line," Tatler says. "His mum probably took offence, but she's probably forgiven him now.

I'm not sure what the whole thing's about. It just kind of works as a rock song. I suppose you could say it's about evil in man – good and bad; the yin and yang."

Shortly after the completion of the song, the group tried it out on an audience. As Tatler recalls, it immediately passed the test: "As far as I remember, it always went down well.

We soon learned that slow songs didn't work live; the faster ones would stay in the set. *Am I Evil* must have gone down well, because we probably would have chucked it out otherwise."

Tatler points out that *Am I Evil* appeared on two different Diamond Head studio albums: "We recorded it for the White album [aka *Lightning To The Nations*]. We had to re-record it for the *Borrowed Time* album, and it felt a bit strange doing it again. But on the White album, I do definitely remember listening back to it and – once I'd got the guitar solo right and all the keys that change underneath the guitar solo – it just blew me away."

Tatler also recalls how he got his particular guitar sound on *Am I Evil*: "There's a slightly strange sound on the guitar which is a wah-wah – this Morley Power Wah Boost. It was set at a cutting, 'nasal' position. It gave it a little more of an 'evil' sound, I suppose."

While the song instantly became a favourite among Diamond Head fans, Tatler remembers the day he was introduced to Metallica's version of it: "We were in the studio, and Sean had gotten a copy of [Metallica's] *Creeping Death*, the 12-inch single, with *Am I Evil* on the B-side. We listened to it, and thought: 'It's heavier and tighter,' but we didn't think it was any better than our version. Because, of course, we're proud of our own recording.

"We had no idea that Metallica were going to become the biggest band in the world. At this stage, in 1984, they were on Music For Nations, and it didn't look like they had the potential to conquer the world – to us. We knew Lars [Ulrich, drums], and we knew how ambitious he was, but I don't think any of us had a clue that they were going to take that style of metal and bring it to the masses in the way they did. I'm thankful that they did, because I don't know what I'd do without the songwriter's royalties of those four [Diamond Head] songs they've covered [*Am I Evil, Helpless, The Prince* and *It's Electric*]. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, so of course we're flattered that they covered us.

"You never play that song and think: 'That's a bag of shit.'"

"Hey Lars! Here's a song for ya..."

ROSS HALFIN X2

They could have covered Witchfinder General, couldn't they? [laughs]"

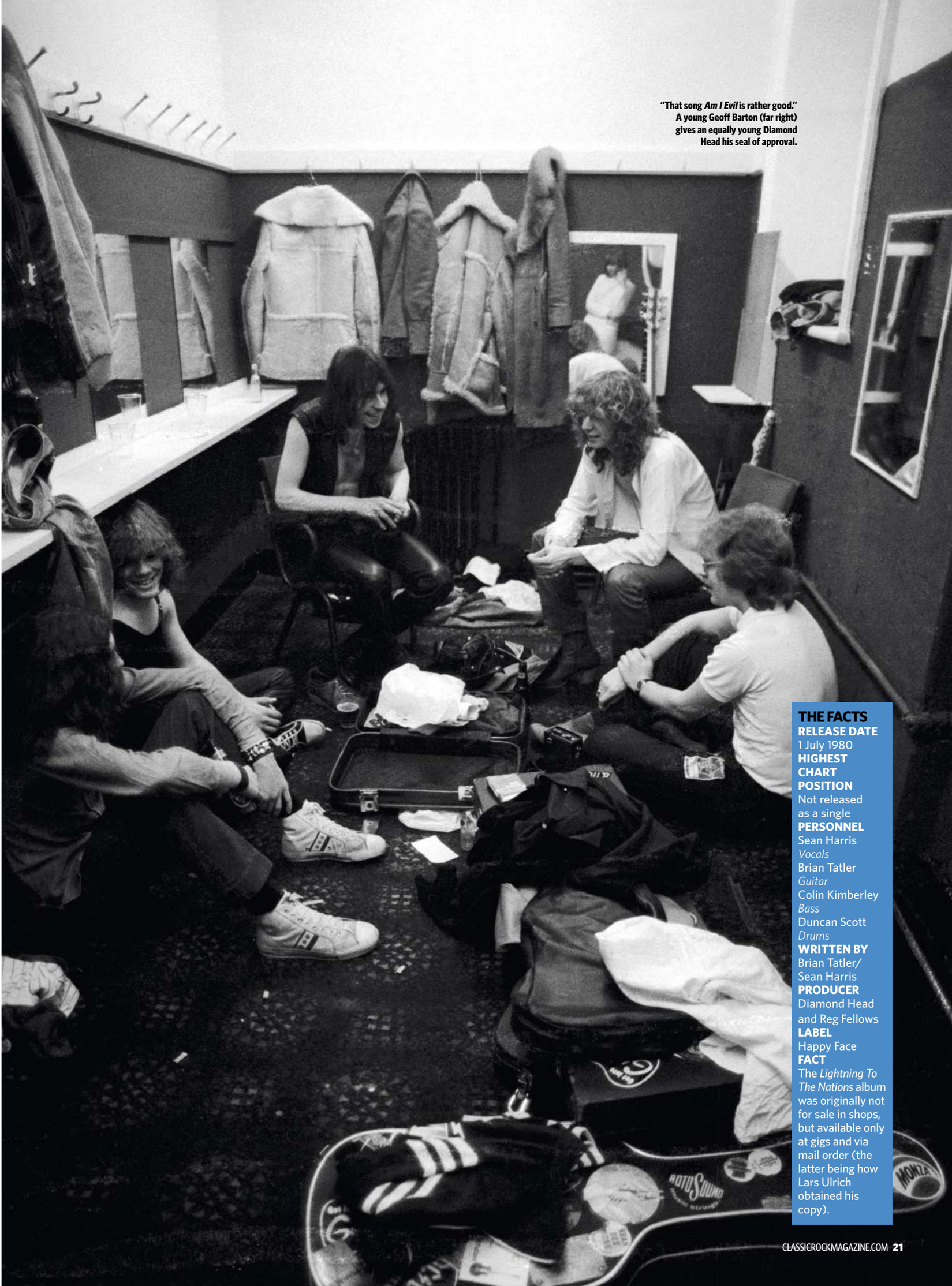
Having split up in the mid-80s, Diamond Head reunited sporadically throughout the 90s, before Tatler soldiered on without Harris. To this day *Am I Evil* remains in the set-list.

"Every time we play it live, that riff seems to stir up something in the audience, and it's always a winner," Tatler says. "You just can't fail if you fire into that riff. The crowd duly responds. It's just got something about it. It's fairly easy to play as well. It almost seems like, if you like rock, it's one of the first riffs you learn. And I quite like that – it's not some clever, complicated thing. It's like a *Smoke On The Water* – a nice, simple, heavy riff that you can hum and remember."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Tatler agrees that *Am I Evil* is among Diamond Head's best songs: "I would say it's one of the best, yes. It had all the ingredients – a good riff, a good chorus, it went fast, there's a big guitar solo in it, it had good dynamics… Songs like that are hard to write.

I don't know how we did some of those songs. They don't obey rules of songwriting; we did whatever we felt, rather than followed any rules like verse-bridge-chorus.

"There was a naïveté in the early songs. Like I said, it always works. You never play that song and think: 'That's a bag of shit.'"



"That song *Am I Evil* is rather good." A young Geoff Barton (far right) gives an equally young Diamond Head his seal of approval.

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
1 July 1980

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
Not released as a single

PERSONNEL
Sean Harris
Vocals
Brian Tatler
Guitar
Colin Kimberley
Bass
Duncan Scott
Drums

WRITTEN BY
Brian Tatler/ Sean Harris

PRODUCER
Diamond Head and Reg Fellows

LABEL
Happy Face

FACT
The *Lightning To The Nations* album was originally not for sale in shops, but available only at gigs and via mail order (the latter being how Lars Ulrich obtained his copy).

1980 A Year In Review

Words: **Paul Elliott**

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... 1980 might arguably have been the greatest ever year for rock, but amid the many triumphs were some of music's greatest tragedies.

JANUARY began with a rock classic at No.1 on the UK singles chart, Pink Floyd's *Another Brick In The Wall Part 2*. And displacing ABBA's *Greatest Hits Volume 2* at the top of the album chart was the debut by The Pretenders, featuring the No.1 hit *Brass In Pocket*. The US, meanwhile, was treated to The Clash's *London Calling* (which the UK saw slightly earlier in December '79).

In the first month of a new decade, Rush's *Permanent Waves* was a bold reinvention for one of the quintessential 70s rock bands, its modern sound perfectly illustrated by the hit single *The Spirit Of Radio*. Also released in January were *Sheer Greed*, the debut by Girl, cocky London glam rockers fronted

No Place To Run

UFO JANUARY

Accepted UFO wisdom says the band were at their peak with Michael Schenker in the line-up. But although the records were good, on the road the guitarist was notoriously erratic. After going AWOL in 1977 on the eve of a major US tour supporting Rush, and walking out for good in November 1978, the band recruited old buddy Paul Chapman (leading to the demise of Lone Star). Hugely talented and reliable, the Welshman was exactly what UFO needed and with him everything went to another level. After a year of touring, Chapman and the band were revitalised and ready to make *No Place To Run* – which hit the streets in January 1980.

> **"We weren't getting rich. We spent too much money enjoying ourselves..."**

The cover shows the band, photographed by Hipgnosis at night beside a set of petrol pumps for no obvious reason, resplendent in turn-of-the-decade rock duds – 'smart' jackets, stretch jeans and white high-tops. The cover was available in a variety of sleeves, each with the shot tinted in a different colour.

As Chapman's broody instrumental opener *Alpha Centauri* gave way to the full-blooded rocker *Lettin' Go*, it was immediately clear this was UFO at the height of their powers. It also marked a huge step up for them in the USA.

As Chapman recalls: "*No Place To Run* was the tour where everything changed around – we started headlining in America and it was one of the highest-charting albums the band had had over there. There was a real buzz around it. Lots of people today tell me it's their favourite period of the band."

The album was given a big budget with erstwhile Beatles producer George Martin hired by the band's long-time record label Chrysalis to produce a hit single – but trying to get UFO into that mindset was like nailing jelly to the ceiling. Far from his comfort zone with a hell-raising rock band, Martin's best effort, *Young Blood*, just scraped into the UK Top 40 chart.

But the album rose above all this and today is at least as good as *Obsession* – Schenker's last studio effort with the band. Indeed, tracks such as *This Fire Burns Tonight*, *Gone In The Night* or the (probably) Springsteen-inspired title-track are strong enough to have been on *Lights Out*.

Chapman, recalls how, alongside great success, *No Place To Run* brought frustration, too…

"We were so busy touring. Our schedule was so full-on. We were trying to squeeze 15 months out of every year.

"We weren't getting rich. There are some horror stories – but we *did* spend too much money enjoying ourselves. We were our own worst enemies. But at the time you don't think about 20 years down the road. If you could you'd be rich – but boring as shit!" **NJ**

DEF LEPPARD'S JOE ELLIOTT ON THEIR DEBUT *ON THROUGH THE NIGHT* MARCH

"We had the time of our lives making that album. We were young kids – Rick Allen was 15, I was 19 – and we were recording our first record at Tittenhurst Park, where John Lennon lived before he sold it to Ringo! And I drew the long straw, so I got Lennon's old bedroom with the amazing view. By the time we got there, December '79, the place had changed. The white room where you saw John and Yoko doing *Imagine*, there was a pool table in there now.

"When we moved in, Dr. Hook were moving out, and Ray Sawyer, the guy with the eye-patch, challenged me to a game of pool and introduced me to my first smoke of weed. And I beat him! I rang a mate and said: 'I just beat the guy who sang *Sylvia's Mother* at pool!' But my mate pointed out that Ray Sawyer hadn't sung that song, and he also pointed out that Ray only had one eye, so beating him at pool couldn't have been that difficult…

"We had Tom Allom producing us. We'd had three producers up for

continued next page

by Phil Lewis, then squiring Bond girl Britt Ekland, and also featuring future Def Leppard guitarist Phil Collen; *Union Jacks* by The Babys, the Anglo-American pop rock heroes led by singer John Waite and also starring keyboard player Jonathan Cain, later of Journey; and *No Place To Run* by UFO, who had lost guitarist Michael Schenker but *gained* a legendary producer, the 'fifth Beatle' George Martin.

Martin wasn't the only former Beatles producer who turned to rock music at this time. In **FEBRUARY** 1980 came the Ramones' *End Of The Century*, helmed by Phil Spector and featuring a cover of one of the cranky producer's signature 60s hits, *Baby I Love You*. British post-punk music was flourishing with the Psychedelic Furs' eponymous first album and Elvis Costello & The Attractions' brilliant *Get Happy!*, while across the Atlantic, Heart's *Bebe Le Strange* precipitated a mid-career slump and Bryan Adams' self-titled debut showed promise. But February's biggest story was the death of AC/DC singer Bon Scott from what a coroner later recorded as acute alcohol poisoning. Few believed that the band could carry on without him.

Bon's death was felt keenly by Def Leppard, who shared management with AC/DC and had befriended Bon when the two bands toured together. Leppard's debut album, *On Through The Night*, was released in **MARCH** and reached No.15 on the UK chart, while Saxon, another Yorkshire band that had also risen from the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, hit No.5 with *Wheels Of Steel*. And prog-rock icons Genesis would do even better with *Duke*, their first No.1 album. In America, there was a changing of the guard: the first album by the Joe Perry Project, *Let The Music Do The Talking*, coincided with a decline for Perry's former band Aerosmith, just as Journey, with their sixth album *Departure*, were ascending to the status Aerosmith once enjoyed as America's favourite rock band.

In **APRIL** 1980, headbangers were in dreamland. Arriving in this one month were five

GETTY

The Lepps in 1980 (l to r): Pete Willis, Steve Clark, Joe Elliott, Rick Allen, Rick Savage.

grabs. Chas Chandler, who'd worked with Slade and Hendrix. Roy Wood, who I really wanted cos I loved Wizzard. And Tom Allom, who'd done Judas Priest, which sealed it for Pete [Willis, guitarist]. Back then, Pete was to Leppard what Brian Jones was to the Stones – he thought he was in charge but ultimately he wasn't. During recording I got into a fistfight with Pete because he knelt on three of my Subbuteo players on purpose! But Pete was adamant about getting Tom Allom, and to be honest Tom was a great guy.

"Tom's whole thing was to keep the gang spirit up. I've got some great photos of him with rosy cheeks popping another cork. But we worked fast. We did all the backing tracks in a day. Then we spent three weeks completely ruining that record with unnecessary overdubs.

"In hindsight, it shouldn't have been a boys' own holiday where an album came out of it at the end (which is what happened) – it should have been like boot camp. But it's a great record for what it was. *Rock Brigade*'s kinda cool, if a bit daft. *Overture* is very Rush but it has its moments. And we stole a lot from UFO on *When The Walls Come Tumbling Down*.

"Some of the songs were quite dark, like *Answer To The Master*, very Sabbath-like. But one song, *It Don't Matter*, really shows where Leppard were going. That could have been on *Pyromania*. But when we recorded it, the cowbell didn't sound like a cowbell, so we took the kettle out of the kitchen and used that. We put a big dent in it, and when Ruth, the cook, saw it the next morning she went ballistic. Oh well – needs must!

"*On Through The Night* did pretty well for us. It gave us a tour where we sold out Sheffield City Hall. It went Top 20 in the UK. But it got okay reviews – and I agree with them. We were still a work in progress. Compared to the first Boston album, the first Zeppelin album, the first Van Halen album, it's Wycombe Wanderers to their Chelsea.

"Yes, we were too full of ourselves, but who wouldn't be at that age? We were staying at John Lennon's mansion, drinking too much and hanging out with Dr. Hook!" **PE**

Permanent Waves

RUSH JANUARY

Permanent Waves, Rush's seventh studio album and their first Top Five hit in the US, was an unexpected respite for the band, following the crushing *Hemispheres* sessions and years of touring with no elongated break. It gave them an international hit single in *The Spirit Of Radio* and even changed the way they wrote songs.

"*Permanent Waves* was the step," drummer Neil Peart recalls. "It changed how we made records; it taught us to breathe, with *Spirit*… and *Freewill*. We were learning to be more concise too. A lot of lessons were learnt. Not least to step back from it all."

"…*Waves* changed how we made records. We were learning to be more concise."

For Rush fans, it was also an album shrouded in mystery, as the Manics' Nicky Wire remembers: "The mythology that spread around our school about that cover, the blacked out headline, was that there was another version of that existed with the words on… every time you went in a record shop you always had to look for it, it was the Holy Grail."

For Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson it was one of the real surprises when they went back and studied their catalogue pre-tour. Geddy: "I was really surprised by *Permanent Waves*, songs like *Jacob's Ladder* and *Entre Nous* sounded just great."

"It was great getting to do some of those songs again, to experiment with it," agrees Lifeson. "I know Ged was knocked out when he went back to …*Waves*, we both were."

And for some people it's still an album whose parts are almost impossible to play. Peart: "There was a British band Catherine Wheel who did did a really good version of *Spirit*…, mixed it up a bit. I heard an interview with the guy going: 'The parts we left out were the ones we couldn't play…'" **PW**

Rush: getting the hang of short (ish) songs.

Judas Priest: "*British Steel* was definitely a highlight for us."

JUDAS PRIEST MAIN MAN ROB HALFORD ON *BRITISH STEEL* APRIL

"The title of the album was a statement in itself. Sheffield steel was the inspiration for *British Steel*. And we should all be proud that British musicians are responsible for this force in music called heavy metal. Black Sabbath and Judas Priest invented heavy metal – true heavy metal music. *British Steel* is classic Priest metal: intense, angry and fierce.

"With every Priest album you know you're going to get intensity, but we always tried to do something new. And what I love about *British Steel* is that it's so spontaneous, so fresh and so immediate. The sound is just remarkable, very pure and organic.

"We put the album together in 14 weeks. We'd just got back from the US. In those days, it was album/tour/album, an endless cycle. We had to get in

continued from page 23

albums that would go on to become classics of hard rock and heavy metal: Black Sabbath's *Heaven And Hell*, Scorpions' *Animal Magnetism*, Van Halen's *Women And Children First*, Judas Priest's *British Steel* and Iron Maiden's self-titled debut. The latter pair were even released on the same day, April 14! And as if all that wasn't enough, that month also produced the first and best solo album by Thin Lizzy's Phil Lynott, *Solo In Soho*; the eponymous debut by Wild Horses, led by ex-Lizzy guitarist Brian Robertson and ex-Rainbow bassist Jimmy Bain; Canadian trio Triumph's *Progressions Of Power*; Brit pomp rockers Magnum's *Marauder*; and one of the classic post-punk albums, The Cure's *Seventeen Seconds*.

MAY was another month marred by tragedy: the suicide of Joy Division singer Ian Curtis on May 18. The band's second album and masterpiece, *Closer*, would serve as his epitaph two months later. May produced only two albums of real merit. Whitesnake's *Ready An' Willing* was their first Top 10 entry, spurred by the classic single *Fool For Your Loving*. And Peter Gabriel's third solo set, known to aficionados as 'Melt', was a brilliant, leftfield art-rock record, featuring Kate Bush on the hit single *Games Without Frontiers* and Gabriel's old bandmate Phil Collins on drums but no cymbals – an idea of Gabriel's that gives the whole album an unconventional feel. Paul McCartney also released his third solo album, misleadingly titled *McCartney II*, but it was a lacklustre record that suggested Macca had disbanded Wings prematurely.

'April was headbanger dreamland – *Heaven And Hell, British Steel, Iron Maiden, Animal Magnetism* all arrived…'

In **JUNE**, two of American rock's biggest personalities launched albums that promised much in their titles, but where Sammy Hagar failed to deliver with *Danger Zone*, Ted Nugent's *Scream Dream* lived up to the Motor

there and bang it out, 'cause of the pressure we were under. In all honesty, we had no time to think. It's a very stripped-down sound, and [producer] Tom Allom was the catalyst for that. We just let the songs do their job. At the end of the day, it's all about riffs.

"There has always been a strong fantasy element to Priest songs, going back to *Tyrant* and *Sinner*. And *Metal Gods* was another fantasy song, about these metal robots taking over the world. I just wrote it on the fly. And it was the same thing with *Rapid Fire*, when I came up with a new word: 'desolizating'. I've been making up new words for years. I was just trying to express the emotions I was feeling.

"*British Steel* was definitely a highpoint for Priest. We had so much inside us that we wanted to get out. We were on fire!" **PE**

Animal Magnetism

THE SCORPIONS

APRIL

It now seems like a dream team. The Scorpions on tour in the UK, supported by Blackfoot. But that's what happened in 1980, as the German heroes continued their commercial climb.

"We're a different band now to the one we were with Uli Roth on guitar," vocalist Klaus Meine said after the band played the Newcastle City Hall on that tour. "Matthias Jabs has come in, and we're now ready for a new era."

Animal Magnetism was a stylish mix of pumping melodies, crashing riffs and priapic lyrics. "It's what we are," explained rhythm guitarist Rudolf Schenker. "We are a heavy metal band, and most of our audience is male, and they love thinking about girls!"

There were two very different songs here, though. *Lady Starlight* followed on from *Holiday* on the previous record, while *The Zoo* was almost psychedelic.

"We're not all about having a party," laughed Meine. "We love the big ballads like *Lady Starlight*."

"With *The Zoo*, we wanted to do something different," added then drummer Herman Rarebell. "It's got a voicebox, and we tried to make it a little claustrophobic. When Klaus first heard the music, he just said it reminded him of New York – and it all went from there."

The album cover, though, caused major controversy. Design company Hipgnosis had come up with something overtly, and perversely, sexual. The band, though, didn't see it that way.

"I think it's a great cover," insisted Schenker. "This is art, not porn."

"Because it came between *Lovedrive* and *Blackout*, people overlook *Animal Magnetism*," Klaus Meine says now. "But I think it's one of our best." **MD**

"People tend to overlook *Animal Magnetism*, but I think it's one of our best."

***Animal Magnetism*'s success would see the Scorps play the first Monsters Of Rock.**

GETTY X3

continued next page

City Madman's wild reputation. Like Hagar and the Nuge, two of America's greatest bands also met with very different reactions to their new albums: Blue Öyster Cult's *Cultosaurus Eretcus* was hailed as a return to form, while Kiss' criminally underrated *Unmasked* bombed. It was business as usual for two of British rock's legendary names, with Jeff Beck continuing his exploration into jazz-rock fusion on *There And Back*, and the Rolling Stones knocking out the laziest album of their career with *Emotional Rescue*, although the title track was a classic. But there were younger British bands on the up. NWOBHM grafters Samson released *Head On*, with vocalist Bruce Dickinson's performance impressing many, including his future employers Iron Maiden. And Girlschool, the all-female kindred spirits of Motörhead, debuted with *Demolition*. In Germany, Accept emerged as potential heirs to Judas Priest with their gonzoid second album *I'm A Rebel*.

'Five months after Bon Scott's death, AC/DC released *Back In Black* – it would be the biggest-selling rock album ever.'

In **JULY** came The Big One. Five months after the death of Bon Scott, AC/DC released their comeback album *Back In Black*, with new singer Brian Johnson. Against all the odds, *Back In Black* went on to become the biggest-selling rock album of all time. Two weeks after its release, *Back In Black* topped the UK chart, just as Queen had done a fortnight earlier with *The Game*, their only transatlantic No.1. Rather less successful, but rightly revered by hard rock connoisseurs, were *Tomcattin'* by Southern rock rebels Blackfoot, *Metal Rendezvous* by Swiss/Maltese riff merchants Krokus, and *Wild Cat* by North-East metalheads Tygers Of Pan Tang. And for those of a loftier disposition, there

Iron Maiden

IRON MAIDEN APRIL

April, 1980. Iron Maiden release their self-titled debut album. It hits the UK charts at No.4. And, suddenly, NWOBHM is a serious commercial force. This is more than the band themselves had dared hope to achieve. "What we're trying to do is capture our live energy in the studio," bassist Steve Harris admitted just a couple of months earlier. "We know the songs are good enough. But being in the studio is a learning experience as much as anything else."

"We're not even thinking about becoming rock stars," added vocalist Paul Di'Anno. "Our dream was always to be able to make an album. Now that's coming true!"

Iron Maiden has become an iconic inspiration for succeeding generations, But in 1980, it was all about the young leaders of NWOBHM living up to the expectations of the fans and the media.

"I still can't believe it," exclaimed guitarist Dennis Stratton, on the day the record entered the charts. "I can afford to buy a round of drinks!"

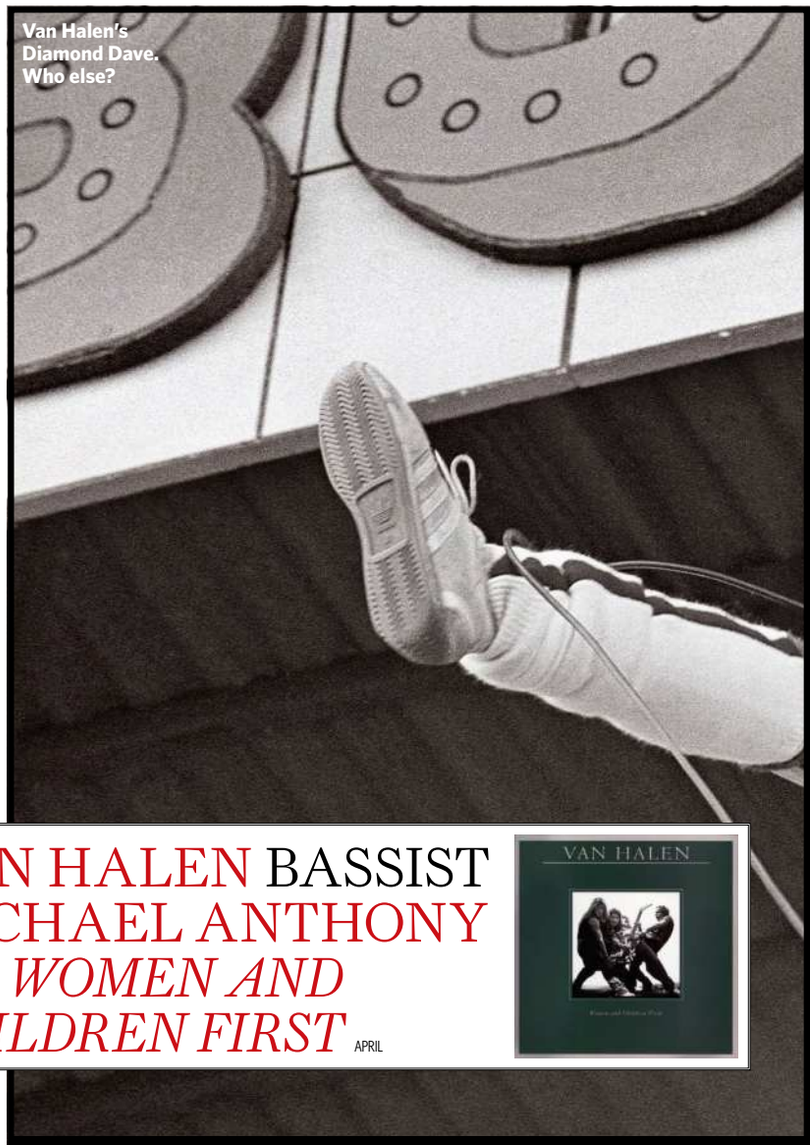
While the success changed Maiden's status from rising young hopefuls to big time contenders, Harris wasn't happy with the production. "I don't like the way our debut sounds," he admits. "[Producer] Will Malone didn't get what we were all about. I wish I could go back and do it all over again."

In many ways, that first Maiden album was the foundation for everything else that's happened in metal over the succeeding three decades. It set the tone, the standard and threw down the gauntlet. "I've got a message for everyone else out there," proclaimed Di'Anno in 1980. "Iron Maiden's gonna get ya!" **MD**

"I don't like the way our debut sounds. I wish I could go back and do it all over again."

MAIDEN/LIZZY/VAN HALEN: GETTY

Iron Maiden: the Stratton/Di'Anno line-up.



Van Halen's Diamond Dave. Who else?

VAN HALEN BASSIST MICHAEL ANTHONY ON *WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST* APRIL

"In the early years of Van Halen, pretty much everything happened quick. We'd always go into the studio as a band and record together, record live in the studio, and a lot of ideas would come out then. We never took a lot of time actually recording an album until the *1984* album. The record company always wanted us back out on the road, so we'd barely finish an album and we'd be back out on tour.

"When we made *Women And Children First*, there was still some material we were using from our original demos. *Take Your Whiskey Home*, I always loved that song, and that was written even before I was in the band – that's how far back that song goes. *In A Simple Rhyme, Fools* – those were songs from our demo sessions for the first record. We took little parts from old songs and expanded them.

"*Romeo Delight* was like a steamroller coming right at you. When we toured

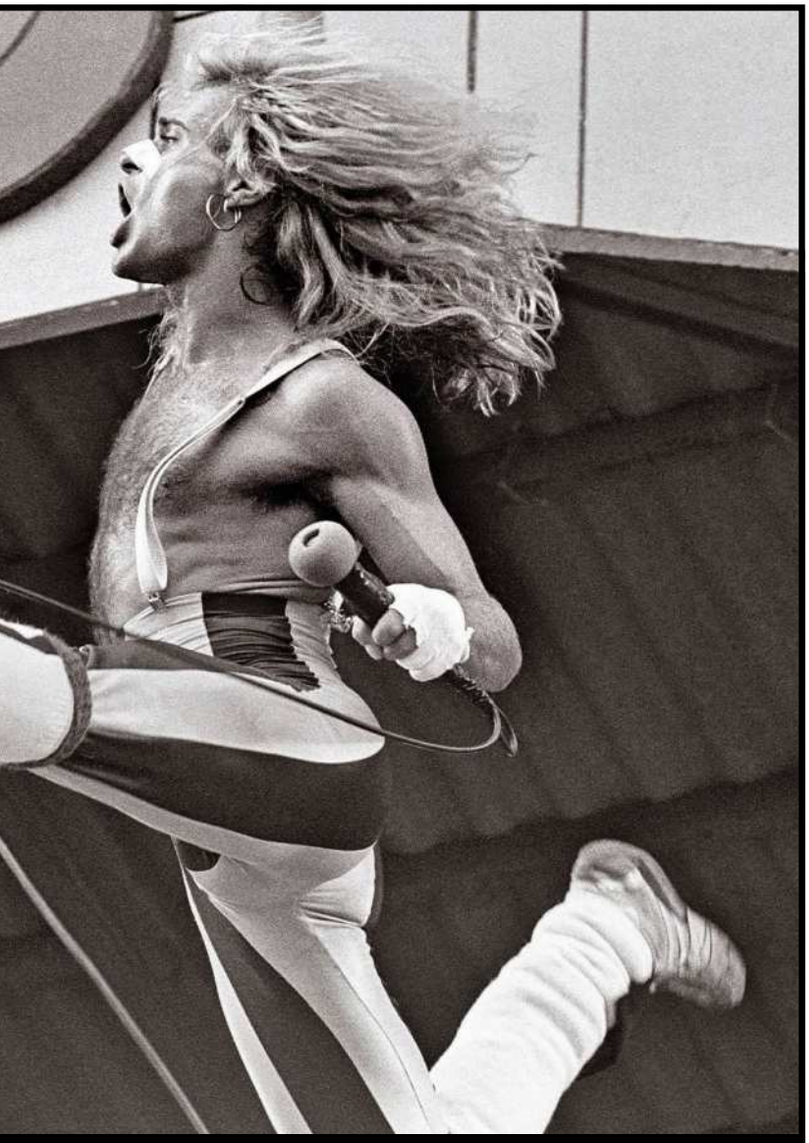
continued from page 25

was Echo & The Bunnymen's dark and edgy *Crocodiles*, and Ultravox's electronic/rock crossover *Vienna*, on which debutant frontman Midge Ure created his magnum opus, the album's hymnal title track, only to see it denied the No.1 spot by Joe Dolce's pre-PC novelty hit *Shaddap You Face.*

For British rock fans, **AUGUST** had long been the focal point of the festival season, with Reading Festival the climax. But on August 16, 1980, a new event was born, one that would set a template for specialist rock festivals for generations to come. Monsters Of Rock was its name, Donington Park its home, and the first line-up assembled made it a dream ticket for metal fans, with Rainbow headlining over Judas Priest, Scorpions, Saxon, Canadian rockers April Wine, and two acts from New York, Riot and Touch. Famously, Touch bassist Dough Howard swallowed a bee at Donington when it landed in his beer after his band's set (not during it, as has often been stated). But he – and Monsters Of Rock – lived on, with Donington assuming mythic status as a holy ground for metal fans.

Albums released in August 1980 included the Michael Schenker Group's self-titled debut (on which the ex-UFO axeman comprehensively outgunned his former bandmates), Gillan's *Glory Road* (Ian Gillan's finest hour outside of Deep Purple), Siouxsie & The Banshees' third album *Kaleidoscope* (marking the debut of drummer Budgie and ex-Magazine guitarist John McGeoch) and Killing Joke's hugely influential self-titled debut (featuring *Requiem* and *The Wait*, later covered by Foo Fighters and Metallica respectively). But fans of progressive rock had their loyalty tested by two controversial new albums. Jethro Tull's *A* was dominated by modern synthesisers, while Yes

'In August, a new event was born. Monsters Of Rock was its name, Donington Park its home.'



we started the set with that – it was right in your face. But Eddie Van Halen was always experimenting with different stuff. When we did *And The Cradle Will Rock*… all of a sudden keyboards entered the mix, but it didn't sound like a keyboard because Eddie played this cheap little Wurlitzer just blazing through Marshalls. It wasn't like he was trying to make any kind of a keyboard sound, but growing up as a keyboard player he was always messing around with them. We heard it and said: 'Wow, this was something different!' But we never wrote with singles in mind. We considered ourselves an album band. It wasn't until *Jump* that we had a gold single.

"It was a party time in the studio. When we went in there, we tried to make the least amount of work of it as we could. Our producer Ted Templeman was dating a girl called Nicolette Larson, she was a back-up singer, and she was hanging out in the studio, so she sang on *Could This Be Magic?* We partied all the time in the studio – that was one thing there was no lack of!" **PE**

Chinatown

THIN LIZZY

OCTOBER

The turn of the 80s was a strange time for Thin Lizzy. Leader Phil Lynott got married, had a second child and recorded his first solo LP, *Solo In Soho* (albeit one that included bandmates Brian Downey and Scott Gorham). But the biggest change was the bedding-in of new guitarist Snowy White after the mighty Gary Moore suddenly quit during the *Black Rose* tour.

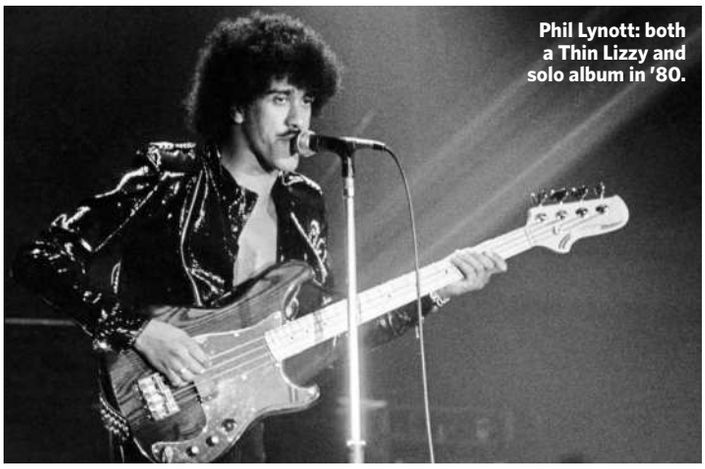
"The band was a shambles and it got to the point where I couldn't face even one more gig," Moore recalls. "I left in the middle of a tour and stayed in LA for a year." Moore had become exasperated by the increasing drug use of Lynott.

Snowy, meanwhile, has "a lot of affection for the first six months or so, when we were working on the album. But even then there were glimmers of what was to come. So much studio time wasted…"

Subsequently, too much of *Chinatown*, their tenth album, lacked real spark. Side One carried the best stuff, from the dynamic *We Will Be Strong* to cocaine anthem *Sugar Blues* and hit singles *Chinatown* and *Killer On The Loose*. The latter proved controversial, a pertinent commentary on the exploits of the Yorkshire Ripper, then very much still at large.

Interviewed on US TV by Robert Klein, who pointed out that the song "doesn't glorify him, but it's almost joyful", Lynott countered: "Chinatown is a seedy part of London late at night. I was there recording, so I got to meet many characters. A lot of the hookers were very paranoid about the killer who was on the loose. I wanted to write a warning song and the way I thought it could be most frightening was to become the part of the Ripper in the vocal… Obviously I don't condone the rape of women." **RH**

"I have a lot of affection for the time when we were working on the album."



Phil Lynott: both a Thin Lizzy and solo album in '80.

continued next page

unveiled a new line-up on *Drama*, with singer Jon Anderson and keyboard player Rick Wakeman replaced by Trevor Horn and Geoff Downes of new wave act the Buggles.

In **SEPTEMBER**, Ozzy Osbourne proved he could live without Black Sabbath with the release of his solo debut *Blizzard Of Ozz*, on which Randy Rhoads emerged as rock's new guitar hero. And Molly Hatchet's *Beatin' The Odds* proved that Southern rock could live on without Lynyrd Skynyrd. The Dead Kennedys confirmed their reputation as the most subversive band in America with *Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables*, a landmark punk rock record featuring the incendiary *Holiday In Cambodia* and *California Über Alles*. The Skids galvanised the British post-punk movement with *The Absolute Game*. And three of rock's pioneering figures released visionary albums: Tom Waits with *Heartattack & Vine*, Kate Bush with her first No.1 *Never For Ever*, and David Bowie with his last classic album, *Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)*, featuring the brilliant No.1 single *Ashes To Ashes*.

But the month ended in disaster. The death of Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham on September 25 signalled the demise of the greatest rock band of them all. Aged 32, Bonham had succumbed to a pulmonary edema (waterlogging of the lungs) following the last of many heavy drinking sessions.

In **OCTOBER**, many rock fans were mourning over their Zeppelin albums. Nevertheless, there were some great new records released, including Bruce Springsteen's mighty double set *The River*, Dire Straits' *Making Movies* (featuring the classic *Romeo And Juliet*, and Springsteen sidekick Roy Bittan on keyboards), Cheap Trick's *All Shook Up* (again produced by George Martin), Talking Heads' *Remain In Light* (featuring their greatest hit *Once In A Lifetime*), Welsh trio Budgie's thunderous *Power Supply*, and Diamond Head's debut *The White Album* (aka *Lightning To The Nations*), which had these NWOBHM heroes from Stourbridge acclaimed as the natural successors to Zeppelin. A couple of great bands were scraping by: Status Quo with the lightweight *Just Supposin'*, Thin Lizzy with the hot-and-cold *Chinatown*. But the re-formed Hawkwind sounded revitalised on

Ace Of Spades

MOTÖRHEAD

OCTOBER

It's the iconic Motörhead album, the one that everyone knows. And the record that turned Lemmy and co from the band who'd kill off your lawn if they moved in next door (as they'd threatened in 1975) and into the one who were regulars on TV shows and in the national papers.

"I suppose we became the one metal band that people could admit to liking," laughs Lemmy. "Even through we weren't a metal band."

Riding high on the back of the *Overkill* and *Bomber* albums in 1979, the crucial change for Lemmy, 'Fast' Eddie Clarke and 'Philthy Animal' Taylor was to bring in producer Vic Maile for the new album. He gave the trio a sharper, harder and more focused sound. "I believe what Vic did was get me singing rather just barking," says Lemmy. "Our playing was a lot more solid as well, and this helped to bring out the strength of the songs."

The power and quality of the songs was, and is, the mainstay of the album. From the title song through *Love Me Like A Reptile*, on to *The Chase Is Better Than The Catch* and finally *The Hammer*, everything slotted into a thunderous flow.

It was no surprise, therefore, that when the album was released on November 8, it stormed up to No.4 in the UK charts, which still remains the highest position the band have ever achieved with a studio record. The title track also made it to No.15 as a single. It was the perfect way to finish what had been one of the greatest years in rock and metal history.

"Of course I'm proud of what we did on that album," says Lemmy. "Was there a magic about that year for rock? Well, we were on a roll." **MD**

"I'm proud of what we did. Was there a magic about 1980? Well, we were on a roll."

Motörhead: "We weren't really a metal band."

Saxon: "People underestimated us."

SAXON: REX FEATURES. MOTÖRHEAD: GETTY

SAXON'S BIFF BYFORD ON 1980

Probably more than any other band, 1980 was Saxon's year. The Big Teasers From Barnsley wrote and released not one but two all-time classic albums – *Wheels Of Steel* and *Strong Arm Of The Law*. The former got to No.5 in the chart; the latter to No.11. They notched a Top 20 single with *747 (Strangers In The Night)* and played the inaugural Monsters Of Rock festival.

"It was definitely a big year for us and for the heavy metal genre in general," singer Biff Byford affirms. "Everything was just right, do you know what I mean? There was a massive groundswell and a lot of young fans were getting into metal. We hit at the right time with some great tracks."

What set Saxon apart was the quality of their songs, propelled by Paul Quinn and Graham Oliver's mighty riffs, Pete Gill's then innovative double kick drum technique, and rounded off by Biff's evocative lyrics.

"I was writing about all sorts of things, really… particularly events that affected me as a lad. I think we were breaking new ground, writing about things like that. That was the domain of bands like Genesis, telling historical stories with quite poignant lyrics.

"*Machine Gun* [from *Wheels Of Steel*] is about World War One; *Sixth Form Girls* [from *Strong Arm*…] is basically about me being in the factory and the girls in the public school up the road. A lot of people think it's a bit of a childhood fantasy type of thing, but that song is really all about the workers of the north and the class divide."

Biff is quick to acknowledge punk rock's influence on the 1980 metal explosion: "We were trying to write fast songs and there were definitely elements of punk in there – the fast and furious riffs were an essential part of it. *Machine Gun* had to be one of the fastest songs anyone had ever heard up to that point. I think we frightened a lot of people in 1980 with those two albums."

Naturally, Biff still harbours fond memories of the 1980 Monsters Of Rock. "It's not difficult to step back and remember us going on stage at Donington. People underestimated us. We were coming on stage as the new British band of people's choice. The crowd went fucking nuts. It was great." **GB**

continued from page 27

Levitation. And ex-Hawks bassist Lemmy was now at the peak of his powers as leader of Motörhead, whose career-defining fourth album *Ace Of Spades* reached No.4 on the UK chart, its legendary title track one of the all-time great rock anthems.

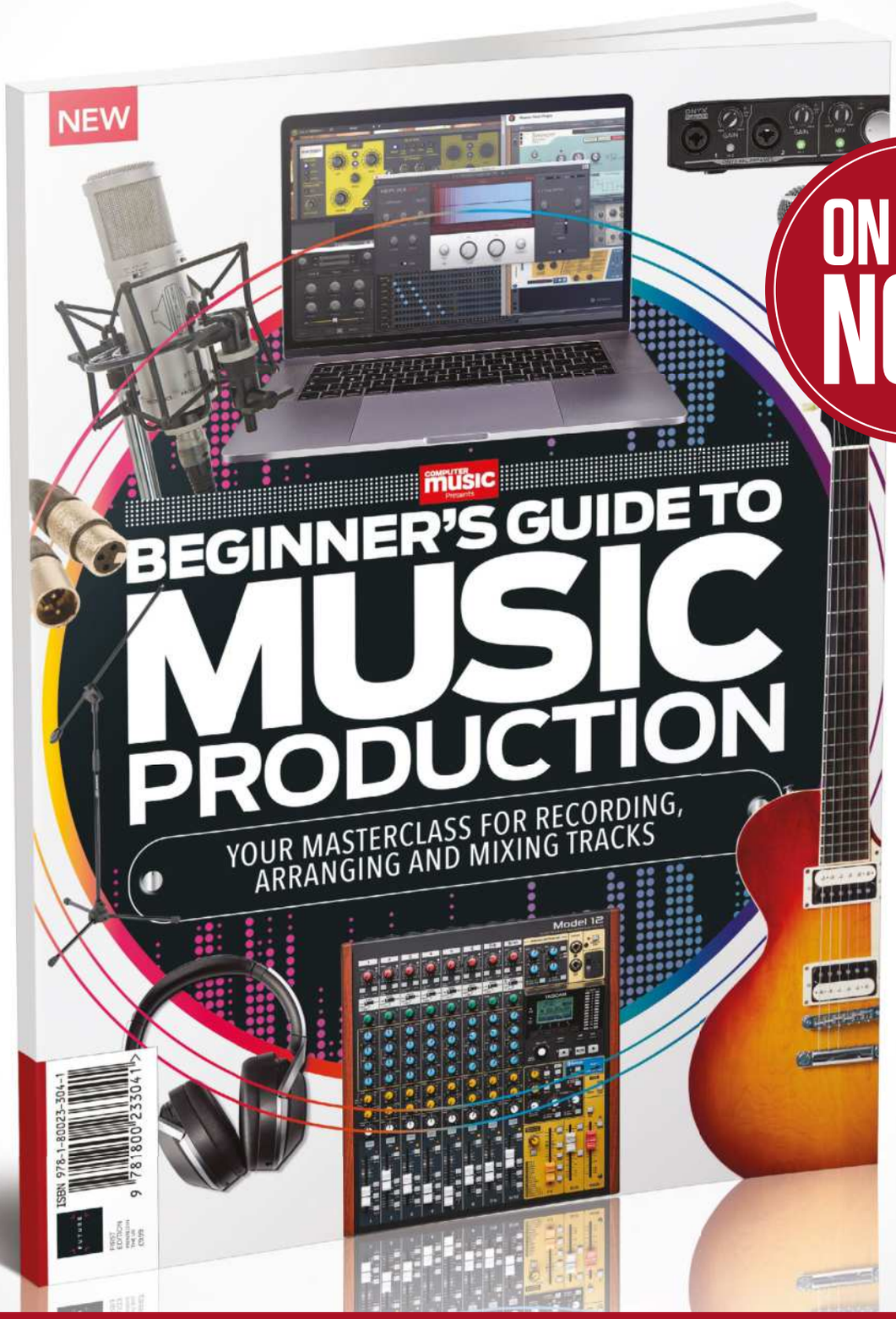
NOVEMBER saw two bands releasing their second great album of the year, *Saxon* with *Strong Arm Of The Law* and Whitesnake with *Live... In The Heart Of The City* (still the definitive 'Snake album ahead of *1987*). Another great live recording came with Irish bluesman Rory Gallagher's *Stage Struck*. And the new face of Irish rock arrived with U2's brilliant debut *Boy*. But in a year overloaded with albums by many of rock's biggest names – Bowie, McCartney, Queen, the Stones – there was also a comeback by one of the biggest names of all, McCartney's old partner John Lennon. *Double Fantasy*, co-credited to Lennon and wife Yoko Ono, was the former Beatle's first album in five years and seemed destined to resurrect his career until, just three weeks after the album's release, came the news that shook the world. The murder of Lennon by deranged fan Mark Chapman in New York City on **DECEMBER** 8 was the most shocking event in the history of music, and the last and most seismic event of a year in which great music and great tragedy had come in equal measure.

'The murder of John Lennon was the most shocking event in a year which had seen both triumph and tragedy.'

The final month of 1980 was the year in microcosm. The last big albums were by The Clash, whose sprawling triple-album *Sandinista!* divided fans and critics alike; Steve Winwood, whose second solo album *Arc Of A Diver* was a smooth adult-rock masterpiece; and Queen, with the soundtrack to the movie *Flash Gordon*. But the death of John Lennon brought a terrible end to a year in which so many great things had happened in music, but so much had been lost.

GET STARTED IN MUSIC PRODUCTION WITH OUR INTERACTIVE GUIDE

The Beginner's Guide to Music Production comes with exclusive access to all the software, plugins and video tutorials you'll need to start making music. You'll be recording, arranging and mastering your own tracks in no time!



ON SALE NOW

FUTURE

Ordering is easy. Go online at:

magazinesdirect.com

Or get it from selected supermarkets & newsagents

Motörhead

Motorhead

Speeding off his tits in a Hollywood hotel room during Hawkwind's 1974 US tour, bassist Lemmy Kilmister writes the song that will change his life forever.

Words: **Paul Elliott**

It gave a name to one of the greatest and loudest bands on earth, defined the man who wrote it as the epitome of the sex and drugs and rock'n'roll lifestyle, and had a profound influence on Metallica, Venom and Napalm Death. But when Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister wrote *Motorhead* almost 40 years ago it was, he says, "just another song". Nobody, least of all Lemmy himself, could have foreseen that it would become arguably the most important song he would ever write.

In 1974, Lemmy was 28 years old and the bassist in space-rock gurus Hawkwind. He'd been in the band three years, and had sung lead vocal on their biggest hit, *Silver Machine*, which had reached No.3 on the UK chart in June 1972. But as a songwriter he was feeling frustrated. "There was never much interest in my songs in Hawkwind," Lemmy recalls wearily.

Nevertheless, he stuck at it. And when Hawkwind reached Los Angeles on a 1974 US tour, he found the inspiration for a new song during an all-night booze and drugs bender. The band were staying at the Continental Hyatt House hotel – nicknamed the Riot House, after the wild parties staged there by visiting rock stars – on Sunset Boulevard, It was the perfect setting for Lemmy to fully immerse himself in the rock'n'roll lifestyle – and to write a song about it.

On the balcony that opened out from his room on the seventh floor, Lemmy wrote the song in a marathon overnight session fuelled by whisky and speed, using an Ovation acoustic guitar that he'd borrowed from Roy Wood, whose band Wizzard were also at the Hyatt.

"I don't remember the exact chronology of the night," he says, understandably given the circumstances, "but I was still up at seven in the morning, howling away at the top of my voice." He also remembers seeing cars pulling up on the street below, as early morning commuters looked up open-mouthed at the screaming, long-haired lunatic apparently about to jump to his death. And yet there were no complaints from fellow hotel guests. "Mind you," he says, "it was a lot wilder in them days at the Hyatt."

What Lemmy bashed out that night was, in his words, "a basic rock'n'roll number". And its lyrics were effectively a running commentary on the night's events. The opening couplet placed Lemmy as a mad Englishman abroad: '*Sunrise, wrong side of another day/Sky high, six thousand miles away*.' The refrain '*Remember me now…*' was a reference to his many one-night stands. And the song's title was adapted from American slang. "A motorhead," he explains, "is someone who talks all the time. I heard the expression and I thought it was rather apt." Lemmy is also "very proud" of the fact that *Motorhead* is the first, and very likely the only, rock song ever to include the word 'parallelogram'.

Lemmy was surprised when Dave Brock consented to Hawkwind recording the song. They cut the track at Olympic Studios in Barnes, south London in January 1975, with Lemmy singing lead. And although that first recorded version of the song was a little sluggish for Lemmy's taste, he did like the jazz-inspired violin solo by Hawkwind's keyboard player, Simon House. *Motorhead* was chosen as the B-side on Hawkwind single *Kings Of Speed*. "How ironic," Lemmy notes.

In May 1975, Lemmy was busted for possession of cocaine on the Canadian/US border, resulting in the cancellation of several Hawkwind gigs. And although he was released after the drugs found on him were identified as amphetamines – a lesser offence, for which the charges were dropped – he returned to London jobless.

Lemmy might have been down, but he wasn't finished. And with a song that Hawkwind dismissed as no more than a B-side, he had the template for a new band. Having teamed up with guitarist Larry Wallis and drummer Lucas Fox, Lemmy originally named his new band Bastard. But, as he recalls: "A friend told him: 'You probably won't get a lot of *Top Of The Pops* action with a name like that.' So I went with Motörhead."

The name was perfectly suited to the band's music: "Loud, fast, city, raucous, arrogant, paranoid, speed-freak rock'n'roll," as Lemmy himself describes it. But it took a little time to really nail that sound – as illustrated by the band's first recording of their signature song in 1976. To Lemmy's mind, this version was "too slow". It was only after Fox was sacked and Wallis quit that the definitive full-throttle version of the song was recorded in 1977 by the classic Motörhead line-up of Lemmy, guitarist 'Fast' Eddie Clarke and drummer Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor. This version was recorded with the whole band – and their producer, the aptly named 'Speedy' Keen – all buzzing on amphetamines. "We were out of our heads," Lemmy recalls. "Speedy did 19 fucking mixes of *Motorhead* and said: 'Which one do you like the best?' I just pointed at one and said: 'That one.'"

"I wrote it at seven in the morning, howling away at the top of my voice... Loud, fast, raucous, speed-freak rock'n'roll."

This fast and loose rock'n'roll anthem resonated with punks and headbangers alike, and was a touchstone for many who followed in its wake.

"That song had a primal power," says Napalm Death singer Barney Greenway. "It was fast, like it was about to come off the rails. It had a real 'fuck it' mentality. And it became a huge influence on punk bands like Discharge and metal bands like Venom and Metallica."

"It's just a song I wrote for Hawkwind, which was updated for Motörhead," Lemmy says matter-of-factly. But for all his nonchalance, the bigger truth about *Motorhead* is that it changed his life.

Motörhead's latest covers collection, Under Cover, is out now on Motörhead music.

RIGHTEOUS STUFF
Motorhead has been recorded not only by Hawkwind and, of course, Motörhead themselves, but also by an array of others, including thrash metal jokers Lawnmower Deth, US hardcore punks Poison Idea and 90s 'acid jazz' also-rans Corduroy. Primal Scream also reworked it for their 1997 album *Vanishing Point*.

"I got a platinum disc after Primal Scream did it," Lemmy says. "They're a more popular band. Well, they were, briefly." But he wasn't impressed by The Scream's efforts. "I could take it or leave it," he sniffs. He much prefers the version on Cockney Rejects' *Greatest Hits Vol.3: Live & Loud*. "That was good, I thought."

As for the worst recording of the song: "The worst one was Corduroy – a disco version. Appalling."

GETTY

All good, clean fun: (l-r) 'Fast' Eddie Clarke, Phil Taylor and, Lemmy.

THE FACTS
RELEASE DATE
June 1977
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.6 (live version, July 1981)
PERSONNEL
Lemmy Kilmister
Bass, vocals
'Fast' Eddie Clarke
Guitar
Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor
Drums
WRITTEN BY
Lemmy Kilmister
PRODUCER
Speedy Keen
LABEL
Chiswick

Stand up and shout: a defiant Dio makes a comeback.

PEARL DIVER

Many believed **Ronnie James Dio** was dead and buried when he quit Black Sabbath for a solo career at the beginning of the 1980s. But the singer surprised the hell out of everyone when he came up with *Holy Diver*. Here he looks back at the making of a classic album.

WORDS: **GEOFF BARTON**

By 1983 Ronnie James Dio's career had already enjoyed not one but two remarkable creative peaks.

As singer with Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, in 1976 Dio helped concoct the amazing *Rainbow Rising* – a milestone album in the annals of heavy rock, where the thermo-nuclear magniloquence of the Man In Black's guitar playing was in perfect synch with Ronnie's flamboyant lyrical musings and exalted tones.

Four years later, in 1980, Dio almost singlehandedly rescued Black Sabbath from the depths of post-Ozzy oblivion. Cynics said the appointment of the man born Ronald Padovana as the band's new vocalist was doomed to failure. But that was before they heard the results of that unlikely (not to say unholy) alliance: *Heaven & Hell*. With Dio at the helm, the Sabs' growling metal machine became something altogether more sleek and streamlined. As mighty as it was mystical. As brooding as it was bombastic.

No one expected Dio to match remotely those twin achievements when he went solo. But with 1983's *Holy Diver*, the debut album from Dio the band, Ronnie again defied his critics by producing a classic rock album par excellence. The man who cut his teeth in Ronnie & The Prophets and Elf assembled a brand new group featuring drummer Vinny Appice, who he had worked with in Sabbath, and ex-Rainbow bass player Jimmy Bain. On guitar was a relatively unknown Irishman, Vivian Campbell, formerly of Sweet Savage and now a member of Def Leppard. "I just remember being so fired up and so confident in what I was going to do," says Dio today. "It wasn't a matter of trying to match the standards of *Rainbow Rising* or *Heaven & Hell*, because those were special events. But I still felt extremely confident that I could make a great album of my own."

More than 20 years after its release, *Holy Diver* still cuts the mustard (or sprinkles the curry powder, bearing in mind Ronnie's propensity for a good Indian). As this issue of *Classic Rock* goes on sale, the diminutive frontman with the voice of Goliath is reaching the climax of his 'An Evening With…' British tour. Each Dio show naturally features a host of songs from across the man's huge back catalogue, but the main attraction is Holy Diver, which is being played in its chain-whipping, priest-drowning, twin-horned entirety. *Holy Diver* was also reissued as a digitally remastered special-edition CD on September 30.

When *Holy Diver* was conceived it was in the golden age of vinyl. Would it have turned out to be a different type of album in the CD age?
It would have had more songs on it. Absolutely. Vinyl can only hold a certain amount of music. But that's part of the magic of the medium. With only 40 minutes or so to work with, you had to make sure every song was of optimum quality. There was no need to add stuff just to fill up an album. People expect much more in this age of CDs, DVDs and downloads. The restrictions of the vinyl format actually worked to the benefit of *Holy Diver*. All the tracks are so good, much like *Rainbow Rising* or *Heaven & Hell*. The songs just spoke volumes about how good the album was. Still is. It didn't really matter that you couldn't extend it by another 10 or 20 minutes.

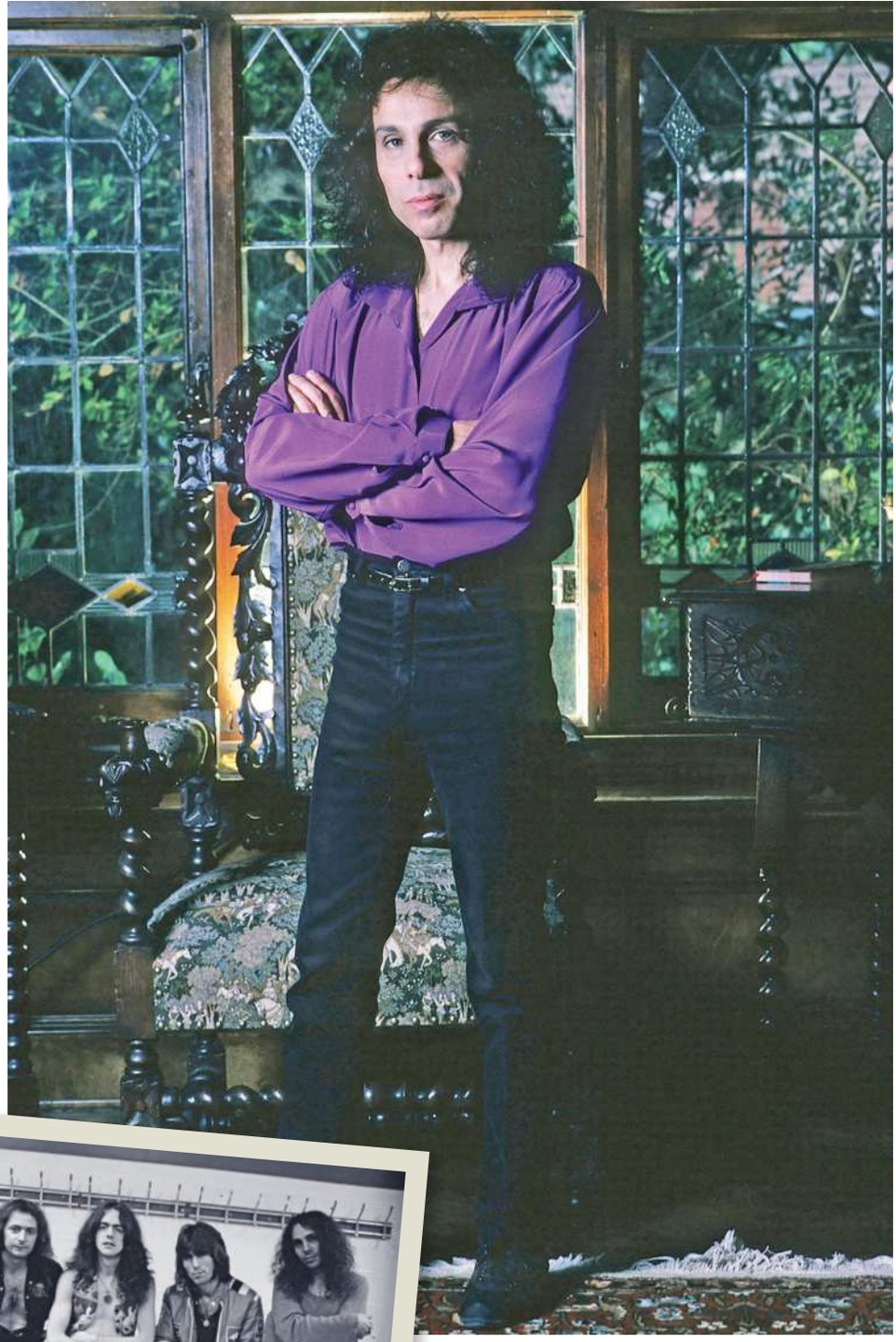
How much pressure did you feel at the time, as a fledgling solo artist?
I never really felt there was pressure to equal or improve upon the things that came before *Holy Diver*. I've always felt that you shouldn't have to live up to what you did before, you should just carry on and be what you are. Maybe I felt pressure for success. But that was only natural.

You produced *Holy Diver* yourself – wasn't that adding to the pressure?
Martin [Birch] was unavailable at the time – I think he was doing an Iron Maiden album. He certainly would always have been my first consideration. So when Martin wasn't available I decided to do the production. We had enough new ingredients in this pot to blend without bringing in an untried producer. An outside influence would've been more difficult. My head was probably too big for my hat at that time. But it did work. I really felt that taking on the producer's role was a feather in my cap.

How do you rate the contributions of the other members of Dio on *Holy Diver*?
It was a very magical time. The right people came together at the right moment. It wasn't because Vinny and I had played together before, or Jimmy and I had played together before, and only one new factor [Vivian Campbell] was being added. Take a look at the songwriting credits – it wasn't as if they were a bunch of sidemen interpreting my songs. I didn't say: "Stand back boys, it's my band." I only wrote two songs by myself: *Holy Diver* and *Don't Talk To Strangers*. I wrote them before we put the band together. But following on from that the other guys' contributions were immense.

And [keyboard player] Claude Schnell's moustache was also immense.
Claude wasn't there for the first album. We hired Claude to be the keyboard player for the tour we did.

The keyboard work on *Holy Diver* isn't actually that prominent.
Jimmy [Bain] and I played all the keyboards on that album which is one reason why it's not so prominent. Because it's not very good! I just did not want to get bogged down by keyboards at that point. I wanted it to be a lot more raw, a lot more approachable, without too much padding in it. If it'd been Claude playing it would obviously have been a lot more prolific. But I didn't want keyboards to get in the way. We became a bit more keyboard-oriented as the band progressed. I think that's just a natural progression. If you have a great tool you may as well use it.



GETTY X3

Rainbow: Tony Carey, Ritchie Blackmore, Jimmy Bain, Cozy Powell, Ronnie James Dio.

[Vivian Campbell left Dio acrimoniously after the band's third album, *Sacred Heart*. Campbell described Dio as "one of the most odious people I've ever come across in the music business". Which explains Ronnie's taciturn answers to the following.] Everyone was querying your decision to put so much trust on a young guitarist for *Holy Diver*.
Uh-uh.

But that trust was borne out by the results.
Oh, I think so.

Ritchie Blackmore is touring the UK with Blackmore's Night shortly. If he turned up at one of your shows, would you let him jam with you?
Of course, if he wanted to. I have nothing but the greatest of respect for Ritchie. I've always said he's a genius. He gave me my greatest opportunity [with Rainbow] and to have a guy like that playing with you would be an honour.

Would you jam with Blackmore's Night?
If he asked me to I might. But I don't think it would be somethingI'd look forward to.

Deep Purple did it with *Machine Head*, The Stooges recently did it with *Funhouse*: it's a growing trend for a classic band/artist to build a show around a classic album. Is it a matter of having to reinvent yourself every so often?
I don't think so. I've never felt very reinventable. It wasn't something that I'd even considered doing until the question was posed. I was asked: "Would you like to do the *Holy Diver* tour?" At that point it wasn't called 'An Evening With…' I don't really like that title. It sounds like we're supposed to sit on stools and play an acoustic set. Which we're not doing, incidentally.

These are epic shows you're playing at the moment. It's quite an undertaking for a man of your age, if you don't mind us saying.
No, I don't mind you saying. But that really doesn't have anything to do with it. You're either good at what you do or you're not, no matter how old you are. There are still some old honkers out there doing some pretty good stuff. But yes, it's quite an undertaking to do all that maerial. It will be what it will be, and I can only guarantee that it will be good. ➤

HOLY DIVER

GETTY MAIN

RONNIE'S TRACK BY TRACK RUN DOWN

STAND UP& SHOUT

Are the lyrics, '*You are the driver/You own the road/You are the fire/Go on explode*' a reference to you and to your burgeoning solo career?

It was really more of a way of saying to people you don't have to be told what to do, you can do whatever you set your mind to, so stand up and shout and just go for it.

But I guess in some ways it does reflect what we were doing with Dio at the time. I didn't just want to sit around and do nothing after I was gone from Sabbath – I had a new band and we were in the studio recording our debut. I suppose in some ways those words do have a resonance. I wanted a powerful song to open the album. Some of the other tracks, like *Don't Talk To Strangers* and *Invisible*, start kinda slowly. I wanted a strong, powerful track at the beginning.

HOLY DIVER

This was a song I'd written between leaving Sabbath and putting my band together. I went into my little studio, which at that time was nothing more than a room with a Revox in it, and wrote *Holy Diver*. When it came time for us to rehearse in England, where we found Vivian [Campbell] and Jimmy [Bain], luckily that was one of the songs that I could present to them. It was a statement of intent for us at that early stage.

GYPSY

I just wanted to write something that was a little bit, again, harder and stronger. But having said that, *Gypsy* is slower than *Stand Up & Shout* – it's more of a Stones kind of tune.

CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

I wrote that one about our engineer, Angelo Arcuri. He did a lot of the early Dio albums and was also our out-front soundman. He had the propensity of always being caught in the middle. He was always being squeezed in some place. It was more about his personal life. He always seemed to make some really silly decisions that left him in a precarious place.

DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS

Is that you whispering the title of the song very softly at the beginning?

Yes, that's me. Live it was Jimmy who always did the whispering. I was able to do it myself initilly but after a while I thought, it's only a whisper. Jimmy can handle this. So we gave the chore to Jimmy.

Then you sing the beginning of the song in quite a high voice.

That's just a vocal technique, really. It was meant for texture purposes. I sang like a girl, I guess.

Talking about girls, there's the decidedly unromantic lyric: '*Don't dream of women, 'cause they only bring you down*'.

That's pretty true if you think about all the broken hearts strewn across the world. The point I was trying to make is that if you're in a man-woman relationship, you don't want your partner to be a stranger.

STRAIGHT THROUGH THE HEART

Riff written by Jimmy. I love the riff. A lot of these songs have my feelings in them, because maybe things weren't going so well in my personal life. Relationships are very, very difficult, especially the ones that are man-woman related. The man always feels he's the one that's getting it in the heart. Which is probably totally untrue. I'm sure it's the other way around most of the time.

INVISIBLE

***Invisible* always reminds us of an Ozzy Osbourne ballad at the beginning, before it gathers steam.**

I think you're going to have be relegated for that comment. You're in the first division now. Nothing that we did on this album was Black Sabbath-oriented at all. I just can't see Ozzy singing that song. Not at all. Had I written it for him I don't think he would've been able to do it.

There's a lyric that goes: '*She had 14 years of teenage tears*'. How's that possible?

I see your point. It's just alluding to the fact that the teenage years are your most difficult, because you have to learn how to do deal with yourself, and your body, and your mind. The number count is completely erroneous and I own up to that.

RAINBOW IN THE DARK

One of the album's stand-out tracks, but it very nearly didn't make it on to the record.

I felt *Rainbow In The Dark* was too poppy compared with the rest of the songs. I was about to take a razor blade to the tape – because we used tape in those days, of course – and luckily for me the lads talked me out of it. Thank god they did.

Did you dislike the song because of its squeaky keyboard theme?

I think that was probably why I didn't like it so much. It just seemed so calliope-like, so fairground-like to me. But in retrospect its singularity made it memorable. At the end of the day the keyboard theme was the perfect foil to the overall heaviness of that song.

SHAME ON THE NIGHT

Tell us about all that howling at the start.

It's the sound effect of a wolf.

So it wasn't really you squeezing Jimmy Bain's balls?

I tried to stay away from Jimmy's balls as much as possible. As any sane person would. But talking about sound effects, on *Invisible*, the track we mentioned before, at the beginning of it you'll hear a kind of whooshing sound – as if someone has just disappeared. We tried for ages to get that sound and in the end we brought in a spare tyre from someone's car. We jiggled with the valve until it made that escaping-air sound.

One of our fave lyrics is on *Shame On The Night*: '*Shame on the sun/For you the light you sold*'. It's a neat twist on the song's title.

Well, I'm noted for that kind of thing, for saying things that don't make a whole lot of sense at the time. But then people read into them and realise that in some convoluted way they do make some sense. I like that song very much and that lyric as well.

INTRODUCING THE LEGENDARY BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND

Across six decades, 20 studio albums and thousands of live performances, Bruce Springsteen has cemented his position in music history time and time again. Delve into his life and career to discover exactly why Bruce is The Boss!

ON SALE NOW

FUTURE

Ordering is easy. Go online at:

magazinesdirect.com

Or get it from selected supermarkets & newsagents

Toto

★ ROSANNA

Rock folklore has it that Toto's 1982 smash was a tribute to Hollywood actress Rosanna Arquette. Not true, say the band: "That bitch has ridden our coat-tails for long enough."

WORDS: HENRY YATES

REX FEATURES

WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Never mind Rosanna Arquette, most men of a certain age remember Toto's song *Rosanna* for the leggy female dancer (pictured) in the promo video.

"We hired a huge studio over a weekend and filmed *Rosanna* and *Africa*," says singer Bobby Kimball. "With *Rosanna* they wanted to make a storyboard out of the video that was similar to *West Side Story*, with dancers, a wire fence and a girl with beautiful legs. The girl is called Cynthia Rhodes. And we actually saw her recently when we played the House Of Blues in Chicago."

In 1982 the members of Toto discovered an angel in their midst. Her name was Rosanna Arquette, a 20-something actress whose career was still three years away from pay dirt in 1985's *Desperately Seeking Susan*, and whose fledgling relationship with Toto keyboard player Steve Porcaro meant she occasionally dropped off beers as the band recorded what would become *Toto IV*. "We got on quite well with her," recalls singer Bobby Kimball. "She was going out with Steve and we were always respectful to each other's partners. I mean, how hard is it to have a beautiful woman around?"

Arquette was not the only thing of beauty in LA's Studio 55 during that time. One track recorded for *Toto IV* stood out above all others. In contrast to some of the album's harder tracks, this was a lilting power ballad, sketched out by band lynchpin David Paich, hopelessly romantic in its sentiment ('*All I wanna do when I wake up in the morning is see your eyes*') and titled simply *Rosanna*.

"David was constantly writing songs at that point," recalls Kimball, "and he came to us with *Rosanna* half-finished. The first time we ever heard it was when we walked into his living room in Encino. He had this grand piano, and he told us: 'I want you to check this idea out.' He was pleased with it, and we were too. I knew it was a hit."

Each member of Toto played a part in bringing *Rosanna* to fruition. Kimball and guitarist Steve Lukather transposed the musical key so the verse and chorus could be traded between them as a duet. Porcaro and Paich ironed out the keyboard solo at five o'clock in the morning. Late drummer Jeff Porcaro laid down a masterful shuffle inspired by John Bonham. "Jeff was really into Led Zeppelin," recalls Lukather, "and for *Rosanna* he morphed *Fool In The Rain* [from Zep's 1979 album *In Through The Out Door*] with a Bernard Purdie drum groove. And we took it from there."

As former session musicians to a man, it was little surprise that Toto bottled *Rosanna* fast in the studio. "In one afternoon we did the basic rhythm track," Lukather says. "And that first guitar solo was made up on the spot the first time we played it. You just get lucky with stuff like that sometimes."

"I remember that I had my two-year-old daughter listening to my vocal as I recorded it. And when the band recorded their parts, I knew it was something special."

Less expected was *Rosanna*'s impact upon its release in the summer of 1982, with US No.2 and UK No.12 chart placings suddenly making this most faceless of muso bands a household name. "We loved it," recalls Kimball of his overnight ubiquity. "Any time you can get a leg up in the music business you have to go for it. The fact that *Rosanna* was such a hit made all the difference in the world. It's like winning a Grammy or something – people take notice."

And yet, even as it was a hit around the world there was a major bone of contention surrounding *Rosanna*. On the television networks of America, Rosanna Arquette was informing audiences that the song had been written in tribute to her. "It was just an opportune moment for her to grab the brass ring and run with it," says Kimball. "She was just starting her career, and the song was so big that she went on several talk shows and said it was about her. But I can tell you that it wasn't. David's line was always that he just used the name because it fitted into the song. Then she came into the picture and claimed it."

That sentiment that has always been supported by Paich. "*Rosanna* is about three girls I knew, all rolled into one," he explains. "After I met Rosanna Arquette I just stole her name and stuck it on there."

As the years went by, the war of words between Arquette and Toto over the spiritual ownership of *Rosanna* has gone back and forth, ranging in tone from playful to hostile. In one 2006 interview Lukather openly expressed the opinion that "that bitch has ridden our coat-tails long enough". Arquette, meanwhile, has claimed in print that she doesn't even like the song. "That's because it's no longer useful to her," argues Kimball.

Rosanna had never been left off a Toto set-list since it was written, and it was some testament to the song's popularity that when Kimball returned to the fold 15 years and five studio albums later, it was still the moment in the shows that received the most feverish reception.

"We rewrote the intro to *Rosanna* recently," concludes Kimball, "and decided to do it with keyboards and barber-shop quartet vocals. The crowd gets a little confused when we start it, but then they hear the first line and I see the glow in their eyes. It's the one song the crowd are waiting for. And I can't tell you the number of people who have come up over the years and told me that they fell in love or made babies over that one song!"

"People have told me that they fell in love or made babies over that one song."

Rosanna Arquette: "I just stole her name and stuck it on there," says Paich.

INSET: GETTY

LONDON FEATURES INTERNATIONAL

Toto's Steve Lukather belatedly celebrates Toto being (almost) top banana in the US singles chart in 1982 with *Rosanna*.

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
1982

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.12 ,
US No.2

PERSONNEL
Bobby Kimball
Vocals
Steve Lukather
Guitar, vocals
David Paich
Keyboards
Steve Porcaro
Keyboards
Jeff Porcaro
Drums
David Hungate
Bass

PRODUCER
Toto

LABEL
Columbia

FACT
At the 25th Grammy ceremony, in 1983, Toto scooped three awards for their song *Rosanna*.

'WOE TO YOU, OH EARTH AND SEA
FOR THE DEVIL SENDS THE BEAST WITH WRATH
BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT TIME IS SHORT.
LET HIM WHO HATH UNDERSTANDING
RECKON THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST
FOR IT IS A HUMAN NUMBER.
ITS NUMBER IS...
SIX HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SIX'

Before *The Number Of The Beast*, **Iron Maiden** were just part of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. After it they were a worldwide major band. But sacking their 'problem' singer wasn't the only price they had to pay for its success.

Words: **Paul Brannigan** Portrait: **Ross Halfin**

In the summer of 1981, Iron Maiden took the decision to fire singer Paul Di'Anno. It was a bold move. The brash, cocksure, 23-year-old East Londoner was a hero to the headbangers, earthdogs, hell rats and rivet-heads whose fanatical support had propelled Maiden to the forefront of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. His expulsion from the band not only marked the end of an era, but also was viewed with a certain amount of unease by long-term supporters. There was genuine concern that, having failed to match the Top 10 success of 1980's self-titled debut album with the more considered follow-up, *Killers*, Maiden were now thinking about a stylistic makeover more attuned to the lucrative, but notoriously fickle, American rock market.

In December 1981, when the freshly minted *Kerrang!* magazine published its first Readers' Poll, Maiden were conspicuous by their absence in the Best Band category. The slight didn't escape the attention of bassist and founder Steve Harris, but he had more pressing matters to focus on. At the time, Maiden were holed up in an East London rehearsal studio with a new singer, 23-year-old Bruce Dickinson, but as yet no new songs for their crucial third album. The pressure was on the young band as never before. But with their backs to the wall, Maiden responded magnificently. Just four months later they emerged with *The Number Of The Beast*, a record that not only redefined their own career, but also served as a benchmark for every heavy metal album that has followed over the past 30 years.

Steve Harris: We knew that it was a big deal to change our singer, but we also knew that we couldn't carry on with Paul. When he first got involved with the band, Rod [Smallwood, manager] asked me was there any potential problems that might crop up in the future that he should know about. And I said: "I've got to be honest. There may be a problem with Paul, because sometimes his attitude is a bit weird."

Paul Di'Anno: By the time of *Killers* the band was getting a bit more technical. I didn't think the songs had the same attack, and I started losing interest. I felt that I might be letting people down by voicing my doubts, so I said nothing. But then it built up to the point where I was rubbing Steve up the wrong way.

Taking it in his stride: Bruce Dickinson's arrival in Maiden was a key element in their early success.

Celebrating Bruce signing his Maiden contract: (clockwise from top left) Adrian Smith, Steve Harris, Dave Murray, Bruce Dickinson and Clive Burr.

Steve Harris: I always thought as the band gets more successful maybe he'll be more into it. But, if anything, the bigger we got, the worse he got.

Rod Smallwood: Paul started to get a bit into the whole 'lifestyle' aspect of being a rock star. And I was like, well you better fucking control it, I'm gonna be watching you. I knew the only thing that could fuck up Maiden was themselves. But Paul was so over-the-top. He started having vocal problems, he smoked like a chimney, he drank brandy, now he's doing a bit of coke and speed too, and he was missing gigs."

Steve Harris: I'm not into drugs myself, never have been. But I'm not against other people doing what they like – as long as it don't fuck up their gig. Well, Paul was letting it fuck up his gig.

Paul Di'Anno: When you're fucked up on drugs and alcohol you turn into a complete prick. But I did feel relief when I played that last gig.

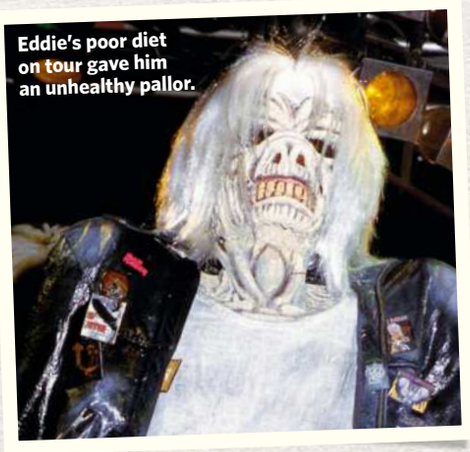
Iron Maiden's final gig with Di'Anno took place at Odd Fellows Mansion in Copenhagen, Denmark on September 10, 1981. Future Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich was among those in the audience to see him take his final bow. But Steve Harris was already searching for a new singer weeks before Di'Anno was shown the door. Former Back Street Crawler frontman Terry Slesser was auditioned behind Di'Anno's back, but his whisky-soaked rasp didn't gel with Maiden's more technical material. Harris turned his attention to the flashy, flamboyantly dressed frontman with Maiden's NWOBHM peers Samson, Worksop-born Bruce Dickinson, aka Bruce Bruce.

Bruce Dickinson: Samson only played a few gigs with Maiden on the same bill, but I was acutely aware that they had a big following. I checked them out when Samson were headlining above them at a venue called the Music Machine. I got goosebumps watching them. It gave me the same feeling I got as a kid listening to *Deep Purple In Rock*. I remember thinking, wow, this is like Purple for the 80s. I was looking at Paul, thinking I should be up there.

Steve Harris: I'd never been much into Samson, but I'd always thought their singer was good. I thought, yeah, the bloke's got a really good voice and he knows how to work a crowd. I thought he sounded a bit like Ian Gillan, actually. When the shit really hit the fan with Paul, he was one of the first people I thought of. Rod wasn't keen.

Rod Smallwood: I hadn't even met Bruce, but I didn't really like him. I thought Bruce Bruce was a stupid name, I thought the white thing he used to wear on stage looked really naff, and also Samson had messed about with Maiden before I got involved; I do bear grudges.

Steve Harris: I didn't care, I just thought the geezer had a great voice. So I said, stuff that, I want him. And so we arranged to go to Reading to have a look and see if he was interested.



Eddie's poor diet on tour gave him an unhealthy pallor.

Bruce Dickinson: Rod talked to me at Reading Festival and said he'd like me to try out. The first words out of my mouth were: "Well when I get the job, which I will, don't expect that it'll be the same as with the guy you've got at the moment." I thought it was probably best to go in there with all guns blazing.

Bruce Dickinson was officially unveiled as Iron Maiden's new frontman on stage at the Palasport arena in Bologna, Italy on October 26, 1981. Following a nerve-racking UK debut for the frontman at the Rainbow theatre in London the following month, the band decamped to East London to write their third album. With studio time booked at Battery Studios in north-west London in December, the clock was ticking.

Steve Harris: There was a lot of pressure. Not only did we have a new singer, we had no material. The first album was like a 'best of' of the songs we'd been playing during the first four years of the band. The second album was mainly early stuff as well, apart from maybe four songs. When we got to the third album we had nothing. We had to write … *Beast* from scratch. Pressure helps to

ROSS HALFIN; ICONICPIX; GETTY

"I HADN'T EVEN MET BRUCE, BUT I DIDN'T REALLY LIKE HIM. I THOUGHT BRUCE BRUCE WAS A STUPID NAME."
MANAGER ROD SMALLWOOD

make you come up with the goods. But you have to go through hell to get there.

Adrian Smith (guitarist): I remember going around to Steve's place – I think he still lived with his gran at the time – and he was playing me the idea for *Number Of The Beast*. I thought: "Wow. That's amazing. That's really different."

Martin Birch (producer): When Bruce joined, it opened up the possibilities for the new album tremendously. I simply didn't think Paul was capable of handling vocals on some of the quite complicated directions I knew Steve wanted to explore.

Bruce Dickinson: It was quite good, in that way, because I wasn't going to be asked to sing words that had already been written by Paul, or songs Steve had written with him in mind. It was all fresh.

Adrian Smith: I was pretty shy about showing the band my songs. It's painful to sit in front of your bandmates and go: "This is my idea", and have them just stare at you. But I thought that if I wanted to stay in the band I'd get pretty frustrated if I didn't contribute ideas. And, fortunately, with *The Prisoner* Steve liked what he heard.

Bruce Dickinson: *The Prisoner* started off in the rehearsal room. Our drummer [Clive Burr] wasn't there, he was out having a cup of tea, so being a frustrated drummer I started bashing out this simple drum beat at the beginning, and then Adrian started playing this riff. Harry came in and went: "Wow, what a great riff!" And then we just started.

Adrian Smith: And *22 Acacia Avenue* was something I came up with when I was very young, one of those first songs you write. I had this band, Urchin, and we did this song, *22*. We were getting stuff ready for *Number Of The Beast*, and out of the blue Steve turned to me and said: "What was that song you used to do in Urchin?" and he started humming it. And it was *22*. It ended up being on the record.

Bruce Dickinson: I still had a legal sword of Damocles hanging over my head from the Samson contract which meant that I wasn't allowed to actually write, which was extremely frustrating, but still, the atmosphere was great.

Martin Birch: I had the same feeling on *Number Of The Beast* as when we did the Deep Purple album *Machine Head*. It was the same kind of atmosphere, the same kind of feeling, like, something really good is happening here.

Bruce Dickinson: Martin was like a guru to me and everyone in Maiden at the time. The whole thing was just a lads' night out. We had a bloody great time.

Martin Birch: I remember we spent ages getting the vocal intro to the title track right. We did it over and over and over until Bruce said: "My head is splitting. Can't we move on and do something else and come back to this?" But I wouldn't let him do anything else until he'd got it perfect. It drove him crazy.

Bruce Dickinson: I got pissed off to the extent that I was trashing the room. When the tape was on, Martin asked me if I could do the scream at the end of the first verse. I was like, "Oh, willingly".

Steve Harris: The idea was to get a blood-curdling scream like the one on *Won't Get Fooled Again*. It worked quite well.

Martin Birch: On the Sunday we were working on the track *Number Of The Beast*, it was a rainy night and I hit this van. I looked in the back of the van and it's got about half-a-dozen nuns in the back. And then this guy starts praying to me. A couple of days later I took my Range Rover in to be repaired, and when they give me the bill it was 666 pounds.

Steve Harris: People don't believe this, but he changed it to 667.

Martin Birch: I remember saying to them when it was finished: "This is gonna be a big, big album. This is gonna transform your career." It just had all the magical ingredients: feel, ideas, energy, execution. And I think the response I got was: "Oh, really?"

The first teaser for Maiden's third album was the galloping, Wild West-themed single *Run To The Hills*. Released on February 2, 1982, before work on its parent album was complete, it became Maiden's first Top 10 single, entering the UK chart at No.7. Proudly out of step with the rest of their chart peers, Maiden were considered a novelty by the media; appearances on *Top Of The Pops* and anarchic Saturday morning children's TV show *Tiswas* followed, raising the band's profile considerably. The exposure paid off. Released on March 29, *The Number Of The Beast* debuted in the UK album chart at No.1.

Steve Harris: *Run To The Hills* was written in that rehearsal room too. I came up with some riffs and we worked it out there and then. It was very spontaneous. It came out fantastic.

Bruce Dickinson: We were on tour in Winterthur, Switzerland when we got the news about the album. We got a telegram on the Sunday morning going: "Your album is number one!" And we went: "Fantastic!" But at the time, we were pushing a 30-seat coach to jump start it, because the driver had let the battery go flat.

Steve Harris: We knew that we'd made a strong album, but sometimes that's not enough. For it go like that, with Top 10 singles and number one album, was incredible.

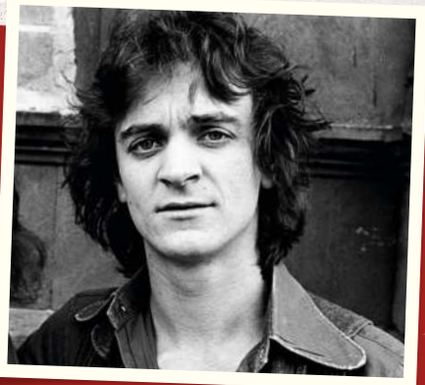
The Beast On The Road tour kicked off on February 25, 1982 at Queensway Hall in Dunstable. It ran for 10 months, racking up a total of 182 shows. And it was on the road that the first tensions between no-nonsense bandleader Harris and his cocky, mouthy, public school-educated new singer began to surface.

Bruce Dickinson: Steve and myself always used to clash. He wanted to fire me after the first month of the *Number Of The Beast* tour.

Rod Smallwood: There was a bit of argy-bargy between them on stage.

Steve Harris: At first I thought I was imagining it. But there were nights on stage during the early part of that tour when Bruce used to, like, try and jostle me on stage. It was all done in fun… only you could tell it was a bit more than that sometimes.

Bruce Dickinson: You had basically a very passive band, except for Steve, who was right up front in the middle. And when I was watching them from the front I was like: "Hmm, I don't like the look of that, that's wrong. The singer should be standing there." So the first thing I did was move my little monitors into the middle, which got in his way. I'd be singing along, getting into the groove, and I'd feel this thump, and he'd be there, elbowing me out of the way.



BRUCE WHO?!

What would Maiden have sounded like if they hadn't brought in Mr Dickinson?

Bruce Dickinson wasn't Steve Harris's first choice to replace Paul Di'Anno when Iron Maiden's sacked their original singer in 1981. Before approaching Dickinson, Harris asked Terry Slesser, formerly the singer with prog band Beckett and Paul Kossoff's Back Street Crawler, to try out.

"I'd tried out for AC/DC," Slesser tells *Classic Rock*, "but it seemed like Maiden's less straight-ahead rock might be a better fit for me. So I thought, 'Why not?'"

Slesser auditioned for Maiden in a rehearsal space in London's Chinatown. He was struck by the band's enthusiasm, but admits that even as he tried out he knew that they'd be taking their next steps without him.

"We tried three or four songs, *Iron Maiden* being one of them. And while I could do some of it, other songs fitted less well," he says. "I couldn't see it happening. If I'd joined, the songs might have been more bluesy, which didn't fit with Steve's vision for Maiden."

Still friends with Harris and Murray, Slesser says he has no regrets about missing out on the opportunity to front the band:

"I'd be better off financially, obviously," he laughs, "but I'm happy that I'm in charge of my own destiny."

THE ART OF THE BEAST

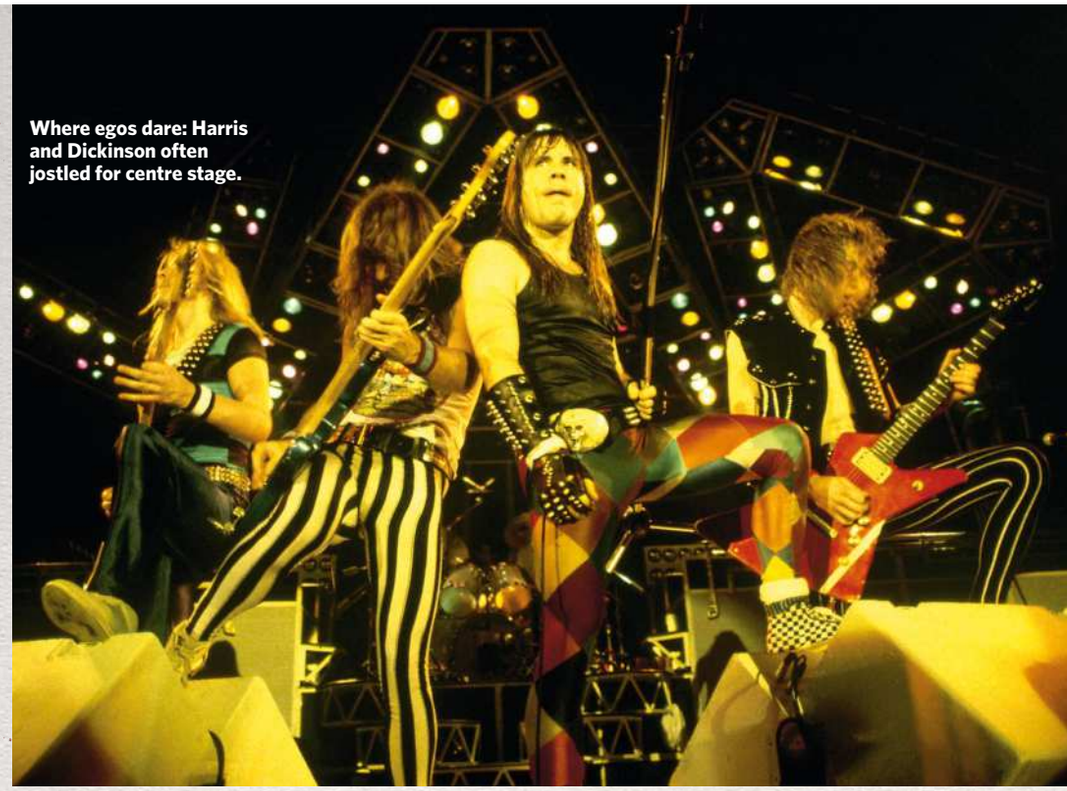
Maiden's sleeve artist Derek Riggs on his iconic *Number Of The Beast* artwork.

"The manager phoned me up and said they wanted a picture for a single cover that was about the devil and witchcraft and was called *Purgatory*. There was a *Dr. Strange* comic which had some big villian with Dr. Strange dangling on some strings like a puppet, which I read as a child. The picture came to mind right away. I thought I coud do a very effective heaven and hell thing using Eddie. Most of those hell backgrounds were taken from my knowledge of medieval European Christian art, which was full of such scenes.

"I spent two days and nights painting it. When the manager saw it he smiled and said: 'That will be great for the album,' and asked me to do another one for the single. I asked him if I could do some more work on it, having been done so quickly, but he was adamant that it was okay. So that was what you got.

"Did I listen to Maiden while was working? No. Working at that speed, I didn't have the time to listen to anything except my own frenzied heartbeat. Also, as I was working right through the night, Maiden blaring out would have upset the neighbours no end."

Run For Cover: The Art Of Derek Riggs, is available from www.derekriggs.com



Where egos dare: Harris and Dickinson often jostled for centre stage.

"A BUNCH OF 24-YEAR-OLDS LET LOOSE IN AMERICA. PRE-AIDS, WITH ENDLESS SUPPLIES OF PARTY MATERIAL AND WILLING YOUNG GIRLS..."

BRUCE DICKINSON ON THE BAND'S FIRST US TOUR

Steve Harris: It was like an ego thing. And it did make me wonder if he was right for the band. I don't know if he thought he had to sort of stamp out his territory or whatever, but he didn't need to.

Bruce Dickinson: We were young and we were all chucked into this huge shit-storm of success and we dealt with it in different ways. To a certain extent you make a Faustian deal when you join a successful band. There is a price that gets exacted upon you, and there's very little you can do about that except hope to come out the other end of it right-side up.

On May 11, 1982 Maiden took The Beast On The Road to America for more than 100 shows that took them through to October. In the south, the album's title track sparked protests from religious groups. "They wanted to believe all that rubbish about us being Satanists," said a bemused Steve Harris. At the end of the five-month US stint, *The Number Of The Beast* had broken into the Billboard Top 40, and Iron Maiden were the hottest new metal band on the planet.

Bill Barclay (guitar tech): The schedules were hefty. We did the Coliseum in El Paso [Texas], flew to England and did the Reading Festival, and the next show was in California. It was pretty heavy going.

Bruce Dickinson: We toured in station wagons, driving around hallucinating with tiredness. Rod said we couldn't afford a bus, until the tour manager was so exhausted one night that he fell asleep on his feet and sleepwalked off the end of the stage. At that point we got a tour bus. Which then became the subject of all manner of shenanigans.

Adrian Smith: We all liked a drink. And we did overindulge. Part of it was adjusting to the whole thing. I went from being in a pub-circuit band to being in a band that could sell out big venues. It did take a bit of getting used to that pressure.

Bruce Dickinson: The experience of that first US tour was like taking a very powerful drug every night. A bunch of 24-year-olds from England let loose in America, pre-Aids, with endless supplies of drink and party material and willing young girls? We weren't vicars, but at the same time we're not daft.

Adrian Smith: Was there a period when anyone considered stimulants harder than drink? I don't think we should go there in a family magazine. It was *mainly* booze, let's leave it at that.

Bruce Dickinson: I remember being pissed, crawling on my hands and knees down a hotel corridor in Tokyo, looking for bread rolls from the room service trays because I was so hungry. I caught a glimpse of myself in a mirror looking like a feral critter and I thought: "What a state you're in. Look at you!" I thought I'd better sort this out, because I could already see that 10-month world tours were going to be my life for the foreseeable future.

Steve Harris: Is it true that I used to feign sleep on long-haul flights just to avoid talking to Bruce? Ha ha. No, I don't think so. We've probably all feigned sleep to avoid one another at some point, but I don't recall specifically doing it to him. Are you trying to cause more arguments?

Thirty years after its release, *The Number Of The Beast* remains Iron Maiden's most enduring musical statement, and the record that turned them from an exciting young British band into a proper global concern, in turn wrenching the spotlight back from America to the UK.

Rod Smallwood: It was the record for the time. There was a lot of interest in metal worldwide, and this was the album that focused everybody. Before *Number Of The Beast* we were part of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. After *Number Of The Beast*, Maiden was a worldwide major act.

Steve Harris: I didn't think it was our best album at the time, and I still don't. There's a couple of tracks on it which I think are not quite so good. If *Total Eclipse* had been on the album instead of *Gangland* it would have been far better. Also, I think *Invaders* could have been replaced with something a bit better, only we didn't have anything else to replace it with at the time.

Bruce Dickinson: We knew that the songs were special. But if we'd known it would be acclaimed as one of the greatest albums in rock history we'd probably have cocked the whole thing up.

Additional sources: Run To the Hills: The Authorised Biography, by Mick Wall.

ROSS HALFIN

THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF ROCK'S PIONEERING DECADE

Relive a time when legends were born and music changed the world. Packed with the best features from Classic Rock magazine, this is the ultimate celebration of the Sixties

ON SALE NOW

FUTURE

Ordering is easy. Go online at:

magazinesdirect.com

Or get it from selected supermarkets & newsagents

Faith No More

We Care A Lot

Faith No More's early singer explains the genesis of the group's first bona-fide classic, and why he feels certain versions are a tad too "tight ass".

Words: **Greg Prato**
Photo: **Gene Ambo/ IconicPix**

While it was *Epic* that truly broke down the door to stardom for Faith No More, it was another track a few years earlier that served as the group's introduction to the alt-rock masses: *We Care A Lot*, the part-rap/part-rock track that seemingly railed against posing pop stars on Live Aid's worldwide stage (and the hypocrisy of millionaires asking for other people's money), as well as referencing 80s pop culture and random world events.

"When we had started on that tour [in support of 1987's *Introduce Yourself*] it had just gotten picked up by [MTV's] *120 Minutes*, and they were playing it all the time," the group's early singer, Chuck Mosley, recalls. "It was the song that brought in a big chunk of the audience at that time. It was obvious by the response. It was almost overnight. We had started the tour, and a week or two later it had gotten on *120 Minutes*. The attendance was totally bolstered by that song coming out."

The quirky little anthem *We Care A Lot* turned out to be Faith No More's first classic, touching on rap, funk, metal and alt-rock – all in a little over four minutes. However, when the group – at the time Mosley, guitarist Jim Martin, keyboardist Roddy Bottum, bassist Bill Gould and drummer Mike Bordin – first heard the tune, not all of them were blown away.

Mosley: "Roddy had this song he had come up with overnight. My initial response… To be perfectly honest, it was the least challenging to me. It was a little bit more commercial than what I was used to being part of. Especially after all of a sudden being in a position where you had a single, and you had to make sure you'd play it every night. I'm a punk rock rebel, so I had to complain about it – 'God dang, this is so commercial!' I thought I was above that, and it was below me. It was fun to sing for a while, then it started feeling kind of silly to me. But it was Roddy's song, and Roddy has a total taste and ear for catchy hooks. Coming from that perspective, I totally respect anything he does, but I felt it was a little soft."

Interestingly, there are three different Mosley-related versions of the song that have been recorded over the years: two by Faith No More (on their 1985 debut album of the same name [in the UK], and the aforementioned *Introduce Yourself*), and one on Mosley's recent comeback album, *Will Rap Over Hard Rock For Food*).

"We named the first record after it, and put it on there. With that record, we ended up shopping it around for a better deal, which ended up being Slash/Warner Brothers. One of the things that they wanted when they signed us was to have us do the song over again, because they felt it hadn't fallen on enough ears. They thought it was a hit. Hence the second version. There were two years between the two versions, and we updated the lyrics."

While some rock acts would possibly balk at re-doing a signature song, Mosley didn't have a problem with it – in fact he welcomed it. "I always like doing the same song on another album. I actually have two songs on *Introduce Yourself* where one song set a precedent, in a sense, in a group of lyrics: *Chinese Arithmetic* and *R N' R*, where I had the same lyrics repeated. *R N' R* was almost like a sequel. I elaborated on the line *'Like the time you tried to teach your nephew to…'*. I had originally said 'fart', but they changed it to 'walk'. So I had a habit of ripping off parts of songs – including my own. It kind of made sense to have a second version, where we were biting off of our own song."

Since leaving Faith No More in 1988 (he was replaced by Mike Patton), Mosley has kept a low profile, save for a pair of obscure releases as part of the group Cement, and a brief union with Bad Brains that didn't yield any recordings. For the past few years Mosley has been working on his aforementioned solo debut, which includes a version of *We Care A Lot*, on which Bottum guests. "The reason [for doing the song] was because when we were playing a lot of early shows, before we had a record, a lot of people in the audience would yell: 'We Care A Lot!' It was flattering… and a little irritating at the same time. So, for the heck of it, we came up with a whole new intro, and we would end it with the chorus chant. Just to mess with people. Or we would do [sings the bass line], sing *'We care a lot'*, and then end it there. Then it just kept growing. Until we decided to do it over – but our way – and have it more laid-back and groovy. And fatter and louder, fuller."

"We were determined to have a version that blew away the first or second one. We just hit on something and it clicked. We updated the lyrics – actually, that time it was 2001, right around 9/11, so we had it talking about stuff that was hip around that time – *Trainspotting* and stuff like that. Unfortunately it took so long to get the record out, that these lyrics are almost dated. I just said forget it. I wasn't going to update it again."

"I'm a punk rock rebel, so I had to complain about it – 'God dang, this is so commercial!'"

And it turns out that the latest version is the singer's favourite of the three.

"Definitely, I'd have to say the latest one! I had no control over the actual music *per se* back then. If I did, I would have directed it to go a little harder and a little less 'tight-ass'. I don't want to say anything to offend, because me and those guys all get along – we have a nice relationship now."

Over the years, *We Care A Lot* has brought in some sweet royalties for the man who is known for his penchant for off-key vocals. "Every time it would die out on one front, I'd get another thing, like *Dirty Jobs* [a US TV show that it's the theme tune for], and then *Rock Band*. And the fact that I had license to do it, since I owned part of the publishing of the song, I didn't see any harm in ripping myself off."

BURY THE HATCHET

When Mosley split from Faith No More, many assumed it was an ugly split. That didn't prove to be entirely the case, however, as the singer and Roddy Bottum have maintained a close relationship over the years. "I've always talked to Roddy forever," he says. "Ever since the day that they had him call me to fire me! We were kind of buddies in the band at the time, and he became the godfather of my first daughter. We've always been really tight. We've never gone a couple of months without talking over the last 20 years."

GENE AMBO/ICONICPIX

You gotta have Faith: (l to r) Roddy Bottum, Billy Gould, Chuck Mosley, Mike Bordin and Jim Martin.

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
1985
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.53
PERSONNEL [original version]
Chuck Mosley
Vocals
Jim Martin
Guitar
Roddy Bottum
Keyboards
Bill Gould
Bass
Mike Bordin
Drums
WRITTEN BY
Bottum, Mosley
PRODUCER
Matt Wallace/ Faith No More
LABEL
Slash/ Warner Bros.

FULL BLAST AND TOP DOWN

Fighting with the Clash, recording with Jacko, swapping guitars for synths – how the wheels came off of Roth-era **Van Halen**: the bad feeling that fuelled feel-good rock classic *1984*.

Words: **John Scanlan**
Picture: **Neil Zlozower**

The singer, on one of his many loony adventures, is lost in the Amazon rainforest weeks before the biggest gig the band will ever play. The guitarist is threatening to burn the master tapes of the new album, which is taking considerably longer than the usual five days to record. Drunken insults will be exchanged with The Clash at a festival supposedly celebrating brotherly love and togetherness.

Yet, to the outside world, things appear more tranquil. Here are Van Halen, seemingly loved and loathed in equal measure; a roving gang of pranksters united in their desire to have fun in a world that takes itself too seriously – "like a buncha of gypsies yukking it up in the Foreign Legion," as the singer would say. And, as recent recipients of the highest fee ever paid to any performer – $1.5m for a drunken two-hour ramble through their best known songs that lands them in the *Guinness Book of World Records* – they have every reason to feel relaxed about the state of their world.

But now, in the summer of 1983, the 70s – and the loose life that decade had promised – seem finally, and belatedly, to be over. Suddenly the stakes have been raised. With MTV in the ascendancy, the record company now wants bona fide hits that will tear up the pop charts. So, it

NEIL ZLOZOWER

Live without a net. Or shirts: Van Halen in their element in 1983.

Eddie and just some of his guitar collection.

"TED TEMPLEMAN DIDN'T LIKE WORKING AT 5150. HE THOUGHT I'D THROW HIM OUT IF I DIDN'T WANNA HEAR WHAT HE HAD TO SAY." EDDIE VAN HALEN

was just as well that here, on *1984* – their final full-length album with original vocalist, David Lee Roth – Van Halen knew they had something big.

All they had to do was make it through to the fateful year that adorned their work-in-progress.

Hidden high in the Hollywood Hills, just a few miles from the more well-known rock'n'roll neighbourhood of Laurel Canyon, you will find Coldwater Canyon. Of the many Los Angeles canyons this was the one where the really wealthy preferred to hide away from the noise of Hollywood. While Neil Young, Frank Zappa and other 60s icons pitched up in Laurel Canyon, the better-off movie stars – Marlon Brando, Charlton Heston – retreated to Coldwater. As the road snakes up towards Studio City from Mulholland Drive, even the most eagle-eyed driver could miss a narrow passage that slips away to the right at one particular sharp bend. It quickly disappears into a tunnel of overhanging leaves and branches.

Here, in 1983, Eddie Van Halen would build a rudimentary 16-track studio, in an attempt to wrest control of the band that bore his family name from the guiding influence of David Lee Roth, the songwriting partner he would soon be comparing to infamous dictators like Idi Amin and Colonel Gaddafi.

While other people went looking for a home, Eddie – aka "Ed Van Halen, the Unabomber," as David Lee Roth would call him – sought a hideaway. In the years since his last album, 1998's poorly-received *Van Halen III*, there have been tales of fans making pilgrimages to that little road that slopes off Coldwater Canyon Avenue in search of nothing more than a security camera that might convey some message – PLEASE RELEASE SOME NEW MUSIC – in the hope that the reclusive guitarist might see that there is still a world watching on the other side of the gate.

Such a lack of activity, of course, is understandable amongst men of a certain age – those who have seen better days and who perhaps still remain shell-shocked by the slow death of the record industry as they knew it. Yet, the waning of Van Halen also provides one big clue to their massive success in the late 70s and early 80s: namely, that they existed as the embodiment of an insatiable desire to live and play fast and loose. Even the cover of *1984* – adorned with the image of a mischievous sprite – suggested that this was a band that might experience some problems with the aging process. "I hate the word maturing," Roth had told *Rolling Stone* in 1978. "I don't like the word evolving, or any of that bullshit. The idea is to keep it as simplistic, as innocent, as unassuming and as stupid as possible."

It was an attitude that meshed perfectly with Van Halen's modus operandi in the years 1977-1982, with albums sometimes cut in mere days and – at most – weeks. In their initial demo sessions for Warners, their engineer Donn Landee recalled, the band cut "28 songs in two hours." In an era when bands would often find themselves trapped in the studio, tinkering endlessly, producer Ted Templeman made sure his charges came to the studio already primed to lay down new material with minimum fuss. "All I have do," he once said, "is stick a microphone in front of them."

By the time of 1982's *Diver Down* album, however, Eddie had decided that there had to be an end to Templeman and Roth's fast'n'dirty approach to studio work. The haste with which that album was conceived and recorded was illustrated by the fact that it cost less to make than their debut album. A sideways take on that album by US journalist Dave Queen, written in 2005, is not far short of how it was probably seen by Eddie: "*Diver Down*, where pothead singer David Lee Roth took over, included five cover versions – with its additional fragments, sketches, and impenetrable arcana, *Diver Down* is like an 'unofficial' Fall release or [The Beach Boys'] *Smiley Smile*. To appease the guitarist, a detail of his famous adhesive taped guitar was the cover art."

The real bugbear, though, was its cover of Martha And The Vandellas' *Dancing In The Street*, a song chosen by self-confessed Motown freak, David Lee Roth. The song gnawed away at Eddie's sense of creative freedom, made worse by the feeling that Templeman and Roth had "stolen" his original piece of music (the song's inventive and pulsating Minimoog riff) to use on yet another cover tune. "I fucking hated that song. I never

"Did you hear the one about the 12 inch pianist?"

GETTY X2

wanted to do it. That was the reason I decided to build my own studio."

Roth, though, saw it all differently. The fact was that any cover tune they did, in his opinion, they owned – "Van Halenized" – in their own peculiar fashion. "A song's a song," he told journalist Steve Rosen in 1980. "It's the same thing as stealing hubcaps – pretty soon they're on your car."

The story of *1984* – or *MCMLXXXIV/1984* to give it the title that appears on the sleeve – really begins on a spring day in 1982, shortly after the release of *Diver Down*, when Eddie showed up at Frank Zappa's house in Laurel Canyon to meet the man who had recently thanked him for "reinventing" the guitar. It would turn out to be a more auspicious occasion than he could have ever imagined, as he got a close look at the well-kitted studio in the basement, which further emboldened him to begin building his own studio.

In Zappa's studio, the two guitarists – along with Steve Vai, a Zappa band member at the time – jammed some tunes, as the 12-year old Dweezil Zappa looked on, amazed that Eddie had turned up wearing the jump suit he was pictured with on the sleeve of Van Halen's 1980 album, *Women And Children First*. As it happened, Dweezil had been learning some choice Van Halen licks himself, courtesy of Steve Vai, which he practiced with his band, Fred Zeppelin.

Seeing as Van Halen weren't due to go out on tour until July, Eddie ended up spending the best part of a month – during May and June '82 – driving over to the "Utility Muffin Research Kitchen" (as Zappa's studio was known) with Van Halen's engineer Donn Landee, to produce a single titled *My Mother Is A Space Cadet* for Dweezil and his little band of non-musicians. "We couldn't play," Dweezil recalled, "and Eddie couldn't figure out a way to get us to play together in time – so he just shouted 'Go', as if he was starting a kart race." As was the case with Eddie's previous non-band work, it was kept low-key, and the production would be credited to "The Vards", a pseudonym chosen by the guitarist and Donn Landee.

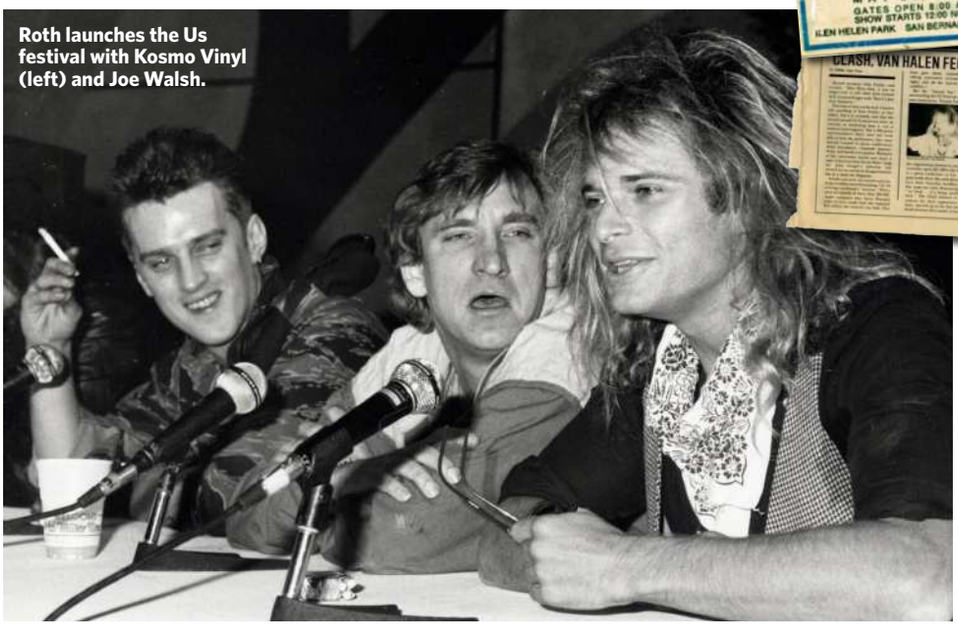
The presence of Landee was significant in everything that would unfold over the next year or so, as he stood shoulder to shoulder with Eddie in his determination to make the new record his way in a studio they would build together. The idea, Alex Van Halen said, was to build "a clubhouse where he could experiment at any time and where there wasn't a clock running. The record company wasn't thrilled about the idea, because they always think that bands are a bunch of drug addicts who need a babysitter. But we had the clout to do it."

Asked some time later if the studio, which would be named 5150, represented a new phase of Van Halen, Eddie said that it was more like "Phase One of Donn and Ed. Donn and I were very involved in this record. We almost took control, to a point, because it was done here in our studio, and we knew what we wanted. We weren't about to let the album be puked out in any way – especially since it was done here."

With Landee back in Los Angeles assembling gear for the studio – including an old 16-track console about to be thrown out by United Western Studios that had been used on sessions by the likes of The Beach Boys and The Mamas And The Papas – Van Halen took to the road in July 1982, hitting Atlanta, Georgia for the first show of a scheduled 90-date jaunt that would finish in mid-December in Jacksonville, Florida, before swerving down to South America in the New Year.

Eddie's first – and probably unintended – blow against Roth, however, occurred during a tour break in October, when he found himself entertaining Michael Jackson and his producer Quincy Jones, who had turned up at his house in the hope that they could persuade him to play on *Beat It*, a driving guitar tune they wanted to record for Jackson's new album, *Thriller*. It was conceived as something along the lines of *My Sharona*, a huge hit for The Knack in 1979. As he banged out a rhythm on one of Eddie's guitar cases, Jackson sang the tune to give the guitarist an idea of what they had in mind. Eddie agreed to do it, but insisted on bringing his own equipment and Donn Landee – it was the only way he would get his sound.

In the surroundings of Westlake Studio in Santa Monica, Van Halen would soon be knocking back a few beers thoughtfully provided by Quincy Jones, who figured it would help the guitarist loosen up. After listening to the backing track a to get a feel for the song, all Jones said was, "Okay, do your thing." The guitarist let rip on a couple of takes, which were so loud that the session engineer, Bruce Swedian, left the studio covering his ears, leaving Donn Landee to man the board. On the final run through, as Eddie was playing the last notes of the solo – which attain the whizz-bang of a firework – one of the studio monitors blew up and caught fire. As Quincy Jones's song-writing partner Rod Temperton recalled, the people at the session could only look on in amazement at the flaming speaker, as if it was some kind of omen: "We were all there looking at this, thinking, 'This must really be something!'" It was something – but also something the rest of



Roth launches the Us festival with Kosmo Vinyl (left) and Joe Walsh.

GETTY

Van Halen didn't want to hear.

Some five months later, David Lee Roth had just returned from a six-week trip through the Amazon, during which he and his bodyguard Ed Anderson – lost and out of contact – were reduced to improvising an existence as they drifted from one nowhere to the next. "A million miles up the dead-empty Amazon river," Roth recalled in his autobiography, "it's like every book you ever read. Ed's making an omelette out of a can of what we think is Spam but in Portuguese is dog food. There was no picture [on the can]. We're shopping up stuff in open-air markets, this is total pirateville." Roth could have had no idea that the press would, in a matter of weeks, be reporting that he had vanished without a trace. British tabloid *The Sun* adopted a gleeful tone in breaking the news on 3 March: "Good news for music lovers everywhere. David Lee Roth, the ridiculously macho singer with heavy metal band Van Halen, has been lost up the Amazon!"

But, back in Los Angeles – musing on his good fortune in not actually being dead – a radio blaring from a nearby car delivered a bolt-like shock. "The new Michael Jackson song, *Beat It*, came on," Dave recalled later. "I heard the guitar solo, and thought, now that sounds familiar. Somebody's ripping off Ed Van Halen's licks."

"Believe it or not," Eddie told *Guitar World* in 1990, "I did the Michael Jackson thing 'cause I figured nobody'd know. The band for one – Roth and my brother and Mike – they always hated me doing things outside of Van Halen. I just said 'Fuck, I'll do it, and no one will ever know.' So then it comes out and it's song of the year and everything."

Roth's return from the Amazon was just in time to prepare for a giant outdoor show Van Halen were co-headlining in San Bernardino County, California. The Us festival, styling itself as a latter-day Woodstock, had been named "us" as in 'we' – not US, or "United States."

They were, though, only one of three headline acts appearing at the three-day festival – the others being David Bowie and The Clash, who had been riding high in the States on the heels of the previous year's *Combat Rock*, a Top Ten album in the US. In a series of press conferences to publicise the festival, where he declared himself "Jah Roth", Dave bemoaned the absence of Culture Club from the bill, but spoke admiringly of all the money the promoters were pushing his way. Talk of the money, though, only served to alert The Clash to the fact that they – with their guaranteed $500,000 cheque – had been valued at just half the price of Van Halen.

With a heavy media operation talking up the neo-hippie "us generation" piffle of the organisers – led by Apple computer co-founder, Steve Wozniak – all of a sudden there seemed to be just a whiff of discord in the air. "You are going to be part of an event so big, so different it will begin a whole new chapter in the history of live music," the Us promo materials ran: "We will be joining together in a celebration that will mark the end of the 'me' decade and the beginning of the 'us' decade." But as the pseudonymous Laura Canyon later reported in *Kerrang!*, what was going on was somewhat at odds with the ethos of "sharing" and "working together".

"Yes, there were acrobats. There were hot-air balloons and computer displays in giant tents dotted around the grounds. But you'd be pushing it to call it a festival. For that matter you'd be pushing it to call it 'us', what with the acts divided from the fans and each other, the police and the punters totally split… and each of the three days divided by the genre of music, with tickets sold separately as opposed to as an overall event."

Stuck in the "95-degree heat, dust and humidity" of the near-desert location, as the *Los Angeles Times* reported, agitated fans broke into sporadic fighting. "There was plenty of drug usage and scattered violence… and one death from an early morning fight in a parking lot."

But of all the bands on the bill, it was The Clash who were torn – mad with rage, on the one hand, that they were being paid less than Van Halen, yet, on the other hand, acutely aware that now the word was out about who was being paid what, they could look greedy regardless. So, Clash spokesman Kosmo Vinyl leapt into action, intent on making sure all this money was seen as nothing to do with them. Bernie Rhodes, manager of The Clash, also told press gatherings that they were asking the organisers to give a proportion to good causes. "We're trying to get Mr Wozniak, who started this whole thing off in the name of money, to put some money back into California. With the figure of $18m being spent, we figure he could give 10% of that to some organisation."

In the days and weeks leading up to Memorial Day weekend, Van Halen's fee had initially been one million dollars, but as soon as David Bowie reputedly asked for a million-plus, the figure now due to Van Halen immediately rose to $1.5m without any effort on their part – simply due the guileless Wozniak agreeing to a clause in their contract that guaranteed they would be the top paid performer at the event. "We never asked for the money," Eddie Van Halen said later of the $1.5m: "they offered it."

Amidst all this, Kosmo Vinyl – "the loudmouth The Clash keep on their payroll to rile things up when their energies flag," *Record* magazine's John Mendelsohn noted in his dispatches from the event – was caught muttering disparagingly about Van Halen and their "hamburger music". Roth, though, was a dab hand at the verbal volleyball himself, once declaring that life was best treated "as if it was the Charge Of The Light Brigade – even if you are only going to brush your teeth."

So, he merely returned Kosmo's ball with added swerve, damning The Clash with faint praise. "Look, I love The Clash," Roth told the assembled press backstage. "I love *Should I Stay Or Should I Go*… mostly because I loved Mitch Ryder's *Little Latin Lupe Lu* all those years ago. But, I fully understand The Clash's position. They're trying to effect some cultural change, and it's tough – they've got a new drummer to break in, man. They've got their hands full – you know what I'm sayin'?"

After threatening to walk out on the eve of their show, The Clash relented. Bernie Rhodes told the assembled press that "the people out there want us to play. Besides, if we didn't play, Van Halen would call us communists."

The Clash's protests about money not being used to support charitable causes and local bands were, in the words of biographer Marcus Gray, "suspicious – given that they had specifically recruited a drummer for the gig, after being offered half a million dollars, and only began complaining after they discovered Van Halen were being paid more." Guitarist Mick Jones even admitted later that the band "all knew that we were just doing it for the money."

When the The Clash took to the stage with a slew of insults Strummer directed at the audience it was as if they hadn't yet reconciled themselves

"THE CLASH ARE TRYING TO EFFECT CULTURAL CHANGE, BUT IT'S TOUGH. THEY'VE GOT TO BREAK IN A NEW DRUMMER, Y'KNOW?" DAVID LEE ROTH

Field of dreams: the crowd at the Us Festival, Glen Helen Regional Park, San Bernardino, May 1983.

GETTY

"THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE I'D BE HAPPY NEVER TO SEE IN SAN BERNADINO AGAIN – VAN HALEN FOR EXAMPLE." COUNTY SHERIFF FLOYD TIDWELL

to the fact that they were still there. "We're here in the capital of the decadent US of A," he shouted. It was a performance that ended with scuffles onstage and recriminations off; between members of The Clash's entourage and the festival organisers, and between the Joe Strummer and Mick Jones of the Clash, who were now barely on speaking terms with each other. "Unfortunately," John Mendelssohn wrote, "no one was hurt." It was to be Mick Jones's last performance with the band.

On the day of the gig, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Van Halen's half-acre backstage area – entered via a pathway signposted "No virgins, Journey fans or sheep allowed on trail" – had been set up for a huge party for 500 guests who helped themselves to "strawberries the size of baseballs," and "barrels of iced-down beer scattered around the enclosure."

Onstage, in between hearty slugs taken from a bottle that was passed between Mike Anthony, Roth and one of his two bodyguards (now dressed as a waiter – appearing onstage between songs with a tray of Jack Daniel's whiskey), the singer addressed the audience: "I wanna take the time to say that this is real whiskey here. The only people who put iced tea in Jack Daniel's bottles is The Clash, baby!" San Bernardino County Sheriff, Floyd Tidwell, whose officers policed the event, afterwards accused Roth of inciting violence by purposefully stopping the band's performance mid-song on a number of occasions to regale the audience with reports of their own mischief, and at one point yelling, "Let's get the cops!"

"More people have been arrested today alone than the entire weekend last year," Roth exclaimed to riotous applause near the beginning of the show. "You are a bunch of rowdy motherfuckers!" In the following days, amidst the wreckage of the deserted site, a disgusted Sheriff Tidwell told the assembled press that "there are some people I'd be happy never to see back in this County again – Van Halen, for example."

With sessions for the *1984* album having begun at Eddie's new studio the month before the Us Festival, in April, Roth and Ted Templeman, in particular, had to adjust to new recording conditions, and a new attitude to time and work. The first song to be recorded at the studio was *Jump*, a song that Eddie had been trying to get the band to record for a couple of years. Eventually, he had to forge ahead on his own. "I put it down with a Linn drum machine, but when I played it for the rest of the guys in the band they said, 'Look, Edward, you're a guitar hero. Don't stretch yourself too thin. Don't start playing other instruments.'" When they finally caved in, the song was duly recut by the whole band in a single take.

With the instrumental track on a cassette tape, Roth left to work on the lyrics and vocal melody in his own peculiar fashion – which just happened to involve being driven around the Los Angeles canyons and along the Coast Highway by Larry Hostler, his roadie. "We get into the 1951 low-rider Mercury painted bright orange and red with a white pin-stripe down the middle, Larry drives and I sit in the back… and I write the songs. We play the tape over and over again on the stereo and about every hour-and-a-half I lean over and go, Say, Lar, what d'you think of this?"

Jump was, in its sentiments at least, squarely in keeping with the stress Roth placed on being in the moment. But, more than that, the song worked because the words and the sentiment actually match the feel of the music. The bridge section in particular, with Eddie playing a tastefully chosen guitar lick and Alex complementing him on cymbals, actually give the sense, like the title of the song itself, of becoming groundless, lifted up by a gust of air.

Backstage at the Us Festival, in late May 1983, David Lee Roth told MTV that the band had already been in and out of the studio. "We've got the singles down, and the rest of it is coming along quite well." When asked about the release date and title, however, he admitted, "I haven't the vaguest idea." At that stage, the singles were *Jump*, *Panama* and *Hot For Teacher*. The album's fourth single, *I'll Wait*, existed in a state of limbo until a few weeks before the album was mastered in October 1983.

After the Memorial Day weekend shebang, there continued to be further interruptions to the *1984* sessions. Roth split for a holiday in Mexico, and Eddie and his wife, actress Valerie Bertinelli, moved into a Malibu beach house they had rented for a couple of months. During days of experimentation – and much to the later horror of the owner of the house, the schmaltzy composer, Marvin Hamlisch – Eddie all but destroyed a white grand piano that came as part of the rental deal. Taking a saw to it, and stuffing its insides with a variety of kitchen implements, he recorded hours of John Cage style "piano abuse". Although none of this has ever really seen the light of day – aside from a one-minute snatch on 1996's *Balance* album – Eddie enjoyed pulling out the tapes and playing them to bemused journalists who interviewed him during the 1984 tour, if only to show how "fucked-up" he really was when given free reign.

But whatever was going on there in Malibu, and back at the studio in Coldwater Canyon, it

began to test Roth's patience, especially when it emerged that Eddie and Donn Landee had seemingly put the album on hold to record incidental music for a TV movie that Eddie's wife was starring in. At times, Roth later wrote, it descended into "the type of ludicrous behaviour where I'm sitting with the producer in one studio in Hollywood, while Ed and the engineer are in another studio."

Eddie and Donn Landee would be "working all night, not getting up during the day," Roth said, and "threatening to burn the master tapes" if he and Templeman didn't quit trying to obtain some of them to work on at another location. They found themselves hanging around outside 5150 "for four and five days in a row, waiting for Ed to pick up the phone in his bedroom, knowing he was in there but wouldn't pick up."

That was the beauty of the new studio set-up for Eddie: it enabled him, at a stroke, to side-line the disciplinarian Templeman – a self-declared proponent of "Nazi" working methods, and triumphant survivor of studio battles with such hard-headed and "difficult" artists as Van Morrison and Captain Beefheart. "Ted sure didn't like working at 5150," Eddie said. "He thought I'd just throw him out if I didn't want to hear what he had to say."

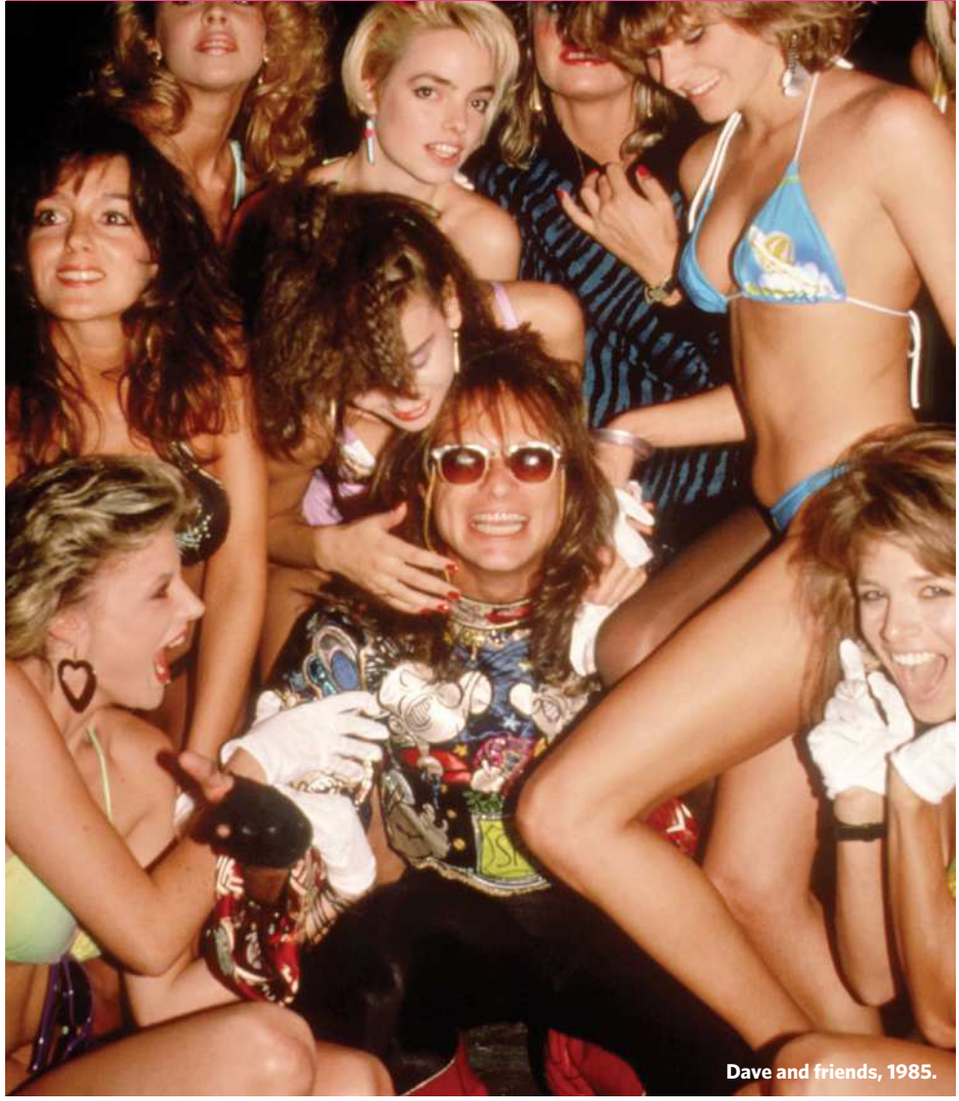
There is, of course, not a hint of such discord on the album itself.

Opening with the unexpected sound of a warm electronic swell, *1984* seemed to herald the arrival of some new mutant, synth-driven Van Halen. But the truth was that the synths had taken outings on the previous two Van Halen albums, as well, and would likely have featured more had Eddie gotten his way earlier. The short instrumental title track and *Jump* follow in the footsteps of that weird time-fuck drone, *Sunday Afternoon In The Park*, from 1981's *Fair Warning*, one of two "synth" tunes on that album, and was followed by another two on the next year's *Diver Down*, featuring both Eddie (*Dancing In The Street*) and David Lee Roth (*Intruder*) on synthesiser.

The surprise on *1984* was it seemed to underline the fact that the synths were here to stay, especially after the global success of *Jump* propelled the album to sales of eight million units in the first 10 months of release, thereby seeming to vindicate Eddie's ideas about what was good for the band.

The other synth tune, *I'll Wait*, with its low and rather nasty sounding bass notes, had a feel not a million miles from Madonna's *Like A Virgin* (a record produced by Roth's mate, Chic guitarist Nile Rodgers, and released a year later). But as with *Jump*, it didn't generate much enthusiasm amongst the band. "Donn and I felt very strongly about it," Eddie told Steve Rosen. "No one else did, so we put it down ourselves. They [the band and Ted] heard it again and said, 'Uh, what's that?"

With the instrumental track in place, Roth still couldn't find inspiration for a lyric. With a mid-September deadline for mixing the finished tracks looming, Templeman called in ex-Doobie Brothers singer Michael McDonald to help rescue the song. "The track was cut and they were kind of stymied on the lyric," he recalls. "I got together with David in Ted's office, and I had put some ideas down. I went over them with him and he seemed to like them. He may have made some changes at that point, I'm not sure." It turned out to be a good day's work for McDonald, as *I'll Wait* would be one of four US hits culled from the album, which by that time was on its way to becoming one of the biggest-selling albums of the 1980s. "It's probably one of the more lucrative things I have ever done in my entire career," McDonald said. "As the Doobies, we did great with records. We had platinum records, but Van Halen was the inception of mega-platinum record sales."


Dave and friends, 1985.

GETTY X2

"I DON'T LIKE THE WORD 'EVOLVING' OR ANY OF THAT BULLSHIT. THE IDEA IS TO KEEP IT AS STUPID AS POSSIBLE." DAVID LEE ROTH

More naturally Rothian in flavour, however, were the likes of *Hot For Teacher*, *Panama* and *Drop Dead Legs*. A little known fact about Van Halen is that they (along with Devo and Cheap Trick) had originally been under consideration for the starring roles in Allan Arkush's 1979 movie musical, *Rock'N'Roll High School* (which ended up starring the Ramones). But on the delinquent outing that is *Hot For Teacher*, they seem to make up for that missed opportunity. This is a tune on which the band truly swings – with Roth 'exuberating' to the max – over some bumpy territory that has previously been visited on tunes such as ZZ Top's *La Grange*, which itself had retraced a path that John Lee Hooker had cut some time earlier. Here, though, the tempo is ramped up to such a degree that it produces, as Eddie said, "a boogie beyond anything" he'd ever heard. It is excessive. But, in truth, any showing off found here merely complement's Roth's genius, dumb-ass, lyrical imagery, which trades brilliantly on the experience of childhood as a time of unfair and daily incarceration (*'Whaddya think the teacher's gonna look like this year?'*; *'I hope you missed us – we're back!'*; *'I brought my PENCIL!'*).

It was something that the band played up to in the amusing video for the song, in which the band alternate between classroom scenes and segments where they take on the appearance of a Temptations-style vocal group, with matching suits and (badly co-ordinated) dance routines. At one point Dave can be seen in front of a cage containing the incarcerated Van Halen brothers and Mike Anthony. In his arms he cradles an oversized hourglass – clock-time being the curse of childhood – as he deadpans, "Awww, man, I think the clock is slow". In the cage behind him, a bad teacher looking like Jungle Jane beats back the guys with a whip.

We can forgive Dave for projecting such juvenile fantasies, not only because they are a celebration of something that is eternally the stuff of rock'n'roll, but because as he once said, he was – temperamentally, at least – approximately 13 years old throughout his career fronting Van Halen: "When you're 13 you have no responsibility, you don't think about fixing a certain note, you don't fear what the critics say, you don't have a whole coterie of people warning you off it. What

makes the tone in my voice is that spirit."

With the band often working late into the night at 5150, a few songs naturally emerged from grooves that Eddie and Alex were just unable to let go of. With the studio doors open, the sound of Eddie and Alex would waft over nearby homes in the Hollywood hills. Eventually, it became too much for Eddie's neighbour, Lindsay Wagner – star of 70s TV series *The Bionic Woman* – who would call Eddie's wife to ask for the studio doors to be shut. Within a couple of years, Eddie would have to buy Wagner out of her property to get round the complaints.

On one night the tune they were jamming would begin to take shape as *Drop Dead Legs*, one of Eddie Van Halen's greatest guitar grooves. As Roth yelps, *'Dig that steam/Giant butt'*, he takes his cue from the sight of Marilyn Monroe in Billy Wilder's 1959 movie, *Some Like It Hot*, as she shimmies past an over-heating train, which is blowing off steam. "I wish I could have been the violin case Marilyn Monroe was carrying in *Some Like It Hot*," he told *Spin* magazine later, apropos of the movies he'd wished he was in.

"In the scene where she's walking along the side of the train, with all the smoke and the steam coming out, and the way she looked."

Like Marilyn in motion, this is a tune that sways and shakes and generates heat, and Van Halen, on guitar, is the one on the beat and driving it all. First there's one guitar, thick and fat – "brown", as the guitarist might describe it, meaning warm, sweet, anything but sharp and metallic. And it moves the whole thing along on its back, like a drunken man taking up the entire spread of the sidewalk as he staggers forth with a friend on piggyback. After a few verses and a chorus section, there comes a lull. Then Eddie seems to sound a bugle call (at 1:26 to 1:33), as if calling out to Alex to get up with the beat. Roth, all the time fixating on that image of Marilyn, sings: *'I get a nut-nut-nuthin but the SHAAAYKS over you.'*

The three or possibly four guitars here sound and complement each other more like the pieces in a sax ensemble than the sawing and riffing guitars of a rock'n'roll band. That may sound an odd thing to say, but before he ever picked up a guitar Eddie wanted to play sax (just like his father), and even as late as 1985 was still saying he intended to take it up. The guitarist first blows low, like a baritone sax, then higher in the register of soprano or clarinet, imaginary valves opening and closing as his fingers get the feel for the tone. Below it all is a cool vamp that seems to temper the heat of Eddie's lead.

This "brown" sound also characterises *Panama*, a song that, in its automotive lyrical imagery, seems to be very much of its place, Los Angeles – the city of the freeway. In fact, driving metaphorically went straight to the heart of the Diamond Dave philosophy of living in the moment. "I seem to have my best moments when I don't consider the creative process," he told Peter Goddard. "As Bruce [Springsteen] says, just sort of roll down the window and let the wind blow back your hair. You just put the top down and the hair will style itself, you know?"

In *Panama* we can imagine Roth as the driver of a modest saloon – like the Opel Kadett he would drive from Pasadena to Hollywood in the early days of the band. But he's a man in disguise, keeps his mojo in the glove compartment, so to speak, and when the moment is right, he can magically transform this clunker into the coolest car on the road – wiping out other pretenders – by intoning the abracadabra word: *'Panama'*. But, the sexual metaphors are playful, as our hero – on spying a lone female driving past – intones the magic word, *'Panama'*, which enacts the transformation of his clunky car into the machine that will direct the object of his desire onto an on-ramp that leads into his bedroom, and out of reach of the losers who were too slow to get the girl. And it is in the bedroom, with *'pistons poppin'*, that the song (and the action, one assumes) reaches a climax.

Los Angeles also provides Roth's canvas for *Top Jimmy*, but this time the picture he painted was more grounded in his day-to-day life. Easily the oddest cut on the album, it features Eddie sounding as if he is playing a guitar strung with elastic bands – partly the result of the fact that he is often slapping the strings. It is one of several tunes on the album – *House Of Pain* and *Girl Gone Bad* being the others – that on closer listening develop a kind of swaying, disorientated, quality.

The "Top Jimmy" of the song was one James Koneck, leader of Top Jimmy And The Rhythm Pigs, whose nickname derived from his day job working a Top Taco stand outside of the A&M Records lot in Hollywood. He and Roth became friendly sometime around late 1980, when Dave became the "anonymous financial benefactor" of an after-hours club known as the Zero-Zero, which was then masquerading as an art gallery because it didn't have a liquor licence. "I met David when I was bartending at the old Zero-Zero club," Koneck recounted in a 1984 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*. "Back when it was on Cahuenga – maybe three years ago. We got real drunk and sang a bunch of old blues together."

The Rhythm Pigs would play "sixty-some Monday nights at the Cathay de Grande," the sweaty basement of a Vietnamese restaurant in North Hollywood where the events of *Top Jimmy* took place. "Tom Waits came in and sang *Heart Attack And Vine* one night. Dave used to get up and sing blues. Ray Manzarek, Albert Collins, Bonnie Bramlett, Percy Mayfield, the Blasters, X and – before she was in Lone Justice – Maria McKee, ➔

Van Helen (l to r): David Lee Roth, Alex Van Halen, Michael Anthony, Eddie Van Halen.

all came down and jammed with us."

The Zero-Zero's regulars included most of the members of LA's exploding punk and alternative scene, as well as notorious party animals like the soon-to-be-dead John Belushi. Club founder John Pochna recalled that "David showed up at the Zero one night very early on and just loved it. He showed up the first time in a limo, and he had these two chicks with him and Eddie Anderson, his personal security guy. The chicks thought they were going to some fancy place… one of those classy, high-end rock places that Rod Stewart would hang out at. They completely freaked out when they saw the look of the place and this raw, totally fucked-up downscale crowd. The chicks were so bummed that David just sent them back out into the limo and then he'd continue to hang out and pick up other chicks… and then he'd send those chicks back and so it would go on and on until the limo was eventually stuffed to the roof with them."

Brendan Mullen, the recently deceased owner of LA's first punk club, The Masque – and also a partner in the Zero-Zero – remembers it as "the place on a cool summer's eve to have sex on the hoods of cars with a joint and a fifth of Jack Daniel's in one hand and a line of dope on the back of the other." It was in the Zero that Roth would hold court in the back room, as beer and pills were swapped in the ramshackle bar area, where Top Jimmy was often to be found dispensing drinks.

As it happens, *Top Jimmy*'s title and lyrics were added very late in the making of the album, around September 1983. Until then this was just an instrumental titled *Ripley*, after Steve Ripley – the designer of the unique stereo guitar that Van Halen played on the tune. Ripley himself had played with Leon Russell and Bob Dylan (and now leads the multi-platinum country act, The Tractors).

In 1994, he recalled how he and Eddie Van Halen "just became best of friends He was a big supporter of my little company. I don't how many guitars Edward bought – probably just masses of them." Once Roth got hold of the tune, though, it would end up being the tale of a night in 1981 at the Cathay De Grande, when Top Jimmy – as if in some great cosmic realignment – finally found himself amongst the stars: *'Jimmy on the television/ Famous people on there with him/Jimmy on t he news at five …'*

The opening 20 to 30 seconds of *Girl Gone Bad* features one of Eddie's most memorable musical phrases, when he taps out a series of breezy, Miles Davis-ish syncopated notes on the neck of his guitar. "Sometimes the shit just hits you in the middle of the night," he told Jas Obrecht of *Guitar Player* magazine. "We were in South America on tour, and I didn't want to wake up my wife, so I hopped into a closet and hummed the guitar lick into a little tape recorder. You've got to force yourself to get out of bed and go, 'Hey, this might be something some day'."

The way the tune begins – with that kind of cool, horn-like sound – probably has a lot to do with Eddie scat-singing those notes into a tape machine, dum-dum-dum-de-da-dum, de-da-da-dum-dum-dum. This figure, which recurs later in the song slightly altered, has a sense of the anticipated beat common in jazz.

Girl Gone Bad presents a slightly different Eddie than the world was accustomed to. Huge, uncharacteristic chords swell, suggesting nothing so much as heat – with each string bristling as he strokes downwards, almost in slow motion. To listen on is to hear a piece that carries us through space with so much going on that the only comparison is possibly with those bebop combos of 20 and 30 years before: Eddie, starting like Miles Davis is then transformed by the throbbing undertow of Mike's bass and the way Alex's kick drum really pushes the band along into some buttery John Coltrane flourishes from the guitar, and then back again to the restrained and cool horn sound of the song's opening bars. It may be the greatest four-and-a-half-minutes of guitar artistry he released.

The album ends, though, with the heavy sway of *House Of Pain*, and with Alex beating the life out of some big cymbals. This, in itself, almost induces the bends as it threatens to become submerged in a muddy cacophony. A song with this very title and with a partially similar riff was recorded by the band back in 1976 when they cut demos with Gene Simmons of Kiss. But, really, what we have here is a very different song. On that demo, Eddie and Alex's parts – aside from the main riff of the verse – were rather more one-dimensional than this *House Of Pain*.

The revamped song also benefits greatly from a new opening – Alex comes in deceptively off-beat, under Eddie's bendy, heavy chord opening, as if landing on the ground mid-earthquake, before the song lands on the old 1976 riff. But these thick, fat, guitar parts are not to be found on the earlier tune. As with *Drop Dead Legs*, Eddie achieves an almost sax-like feel and swing as we hear a band that is much more accomplished than it was in 1976. Roth's lyric, too, is entirely different, much better, and sung to a new tune. And so ends the record, with a nod to the band's early days.

"I HEARD THE GUITAR SOLO IN MICHAEL JACKSON'S BEAT IT AND THOUGHT, 'SOMEBODY'S RIPPING OFF EDDIE'." DAVID LEE ROTH

Is that all there is? One thing that listeners new to the album today might note is how short the album – at just over 30 minutes – actually is. In 1983, the CD, with its 70-minute-plus capacity had just been launched. So, it was still common to think in terms of the vinyl album and its inherent limitations.

Speaking to Steve Rosen in 1983, Eddie said that they had "all the tracks finished for 13 tunes but we can't use them all. The songs are four to five minutes long and we don't like putting more than 35 or 40 minutes on a record because you lose that crispness. It starts sounding like a greatest hit package from the '50s. You lose fidelity."

Although rumours have circulated of a version of Wilson Pickett's *In The Midnight Hour*, a rendering of an old sea shanty titled *Blow The Man Down* (true to the spirit of Roth-era Van Halen), and other titles that were trailed by band members in the press – *Eat Your Neighbour, Anytime Anyplace* – it remains a mystery whether or not anything lies in the vaults. One thing that is true, however, is that Van Halen are perhaps unique amongst acts of their stature in never having expanded editions of albums, box sets and the like. Even in the old days, there was not a single 7" B-side that wasn't already on the albums. In other words, they have always tried to keep strict control of what got out. Indeed, given Van Halen's swift recording methods – which were the norm prior to *1984* – it is perhaps likely that there are no significant leftovers: they went into the studio, cut their tracks in a matter of days, and left.

Nonetheless, as rumours of a new Van Halen album with David Lee Roth once again on vocals refuse to die down, they have always seemed curiously unmoved by their own legacy. A point underlined by the failure of any current band member to show up to be inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame in 2007, and their unwillingness to rake over the past. Such gestures speak of a single-minded determination to opt for a kind of 70s-Zeppelin-style aloofness that sits uneasily with the expectations of an all-revealing internet age. There is perhaps something to be admired in this desire not to simply give the fans what they keep asking for – but it is a stance that perhaps also diminishes the work they have left behind which, at times, just seems to have been abandoned.

At the root of it all is David Lee Roth and Eddie Van Halen's experience of making their last album together, and the perhaps uncomfortable realisation that, due to some cosmic accident, they will forever belong together, regardless of whether or not they can actually stand to be together. "You can wonder what Roth and Eddie Van Halen are doing in the same band," Charles Young of Musician wrote in 1984. "It's hard to imagine two guys with less in common psychologically, yet together they seem to make a complete personality. Extrovert balanced by introvert, logic by intuition, entertainment balanced by artistry."

The sense of time and distance that had elapsed in the Van Halen camp by late 1984 was evident in other small details, too – some of them obscure and little known. There was, for instance, the promo video for Miloš Forman's 1984 film *Amadeus*, which consisted of a compilation of pop music video clips, all set to the music of Mozart and inter-cut with scenes of actor Tom Hulce as the composer – all in an attempt to try and take the film to the new MTV audience. Significantly, Roth appears in the only specially-filmed segments, at the beginning and the end, as an absurd orchestra conductor dressed in a ludicrous – but supremely Rothian – cheetah-patterned suit and bow tie. Tumbling onstage like one of the Three Stooges, Dave brushes himself down and gathers his composure before rapping the conductor's baton against a music stand to say, "Alright gentlemen, I have to get this suit back by five, so let's get it right the first time."

By the end of the year that named this, their biggest album, it was exactly what he was no longer able to do with Van Halen.

Words: Mark Blake, Paul Elliott, Dave Everley, Hugh Fielder, Ian Fortnam, Nick Hasted, Jon Hotten, Rob Hughes, Paul Lester, Dave Ling, Ed Mitchell, Greg Prato, Paul Rees, Sleazegrinder, Philip Wilding, Henry Yates

Welcome to our epic rundown of the *Real* 100 Greatest Albums Of The 80s – the true connoisseurs' choice. The rules are simple:

1. ONLY ONE ALBUM PER BAND Yeah, we know Guns N' Roses, Def Leppard, Iron Maiden and the rest made enough great albums between them to make up the entire list, but that would be boring. We're giving the other guys a chance.

2. DON'T PICK THE MOST FAMOUS ALBUMS The ones we've chosen are the often unsung classics and hidden gems, so expect the unexpected.

3. JUSTIFY IT Why should you care? Well, we're about to tell you.

All clear? Good. Now dig in and enjoy...

IN THE FLAT FIELD

BAUHAUS

4AD, 1980

100

Though it lacked their spooked single of the previous year, *Bela Lugosi's Dead*, Bauhaus' debut helped set goth's template with its chilly, knowing alienation, and a stylishly cinematic gloom suiting the decade's monochrome, depressed start. Peter Murphy called himself "an optimist with nihilistic tendencies", and like Hammer's later horror movies, his band winked while they shrieked. **NH**

What they said at the time: *"Too priggish and conceited… Gothic as a brick."* Sounds

ALBUM

PIL

Virgin, 1986

99

Rise was the single that returned John Lydon to the charts, with its Apartheid-inspired lyrics and defining mantra that *'anger is an energy'*. 1986's *Album* also made symbolic peace between the voice of punk and hard rock's supposed dinosaurs, with the likes of Ginger Baker and Steve Vai among the thunderous hired guns who appeared on the record. **NH**

What they said at the time: *"The music offered no light, no respite – but kept plunging further and further into a heart of darkness."* NME

IF I SHOULD FALL FROM GRACE WITH GOD

THE POGUES

Pogue Mahone/Warner/Island, 1988

98

By their third album, The Pogues had perfected their anarchic folk/punk fusion. From the batshit-crazy rave-up that is *Fiesta* to the cry-in-your-beer *Fairytale Of New York*, never has an album so perfectly caught the spirit (both kinds) of a pub lock-in. **HY**

What they said at the time: *"Within the grooves of* Grace, *you get Heaven and Hell and everything in between."* Sounds

AGENT PROVOCATEUR

FOREIGNER

Atlantic, 1984

97

Foreigner 4 may have been the breakthrough record, but *Agent Provocateur* became the connoisseur's choice. It glows with golden songs and crowns Lou Gramm's career: he would never sing better than he did here. *I Want To Know What Love Is* was the hit, yet *Down On Love*, *A Love In Vain* and *That Was Yesterday* join it as masterpieces of AOR, machine-tooled for their era. **JH**

What they said at the time: *"Have to admit I've had some good times inspired by Foreigner."* Creem

Guitar hero Michael Schenker.

FRESH FRUIT FOR ROTTING VEGETABLES

DEAD KENNEDYS

Alternative Tentacles, 1980

96

American hardcore was still in its infancy when Dead Kennedys issued their defining statement. It took three-chord punk and gonzo surf into biting political satire – *Kill The Poor*, *California Über Alles*, *Holiday In Cambodia* – while retaining a trashily humorous aesthetic. Needless to say, the effect was polarising. **RH**

What they said at the time: *"The only legitimate companion piece to the Pistols'* Never Mind The Bollocks*."* Trouser Press

DAWN PATROL

NIGHT RANGER

Boardwalk, 1982

95

It was the power ballad *Sister Christian* that made Night Ranger famous in 1984, but this debut album, from two years earlier, was their masterpiece. Bassist/vocalist Jack Blades described *Dawn Patrol* as "a full-on kick-ass American rock record", and so it was: supercharged, ultra-melodic hard rock with Thin Lizzy-inspired twin lead guitars and killer songs from end to end. **PE**

What they said at the time: *"A heavy metal Journey."* Kerrang!

MSG

THE MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP

Chrysalis, 1981

94

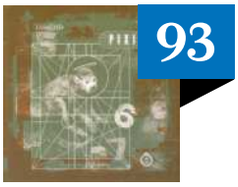
While in his brother's band Scorpions, then with UFO, Michael Schenker became a guitar hero. With his own band, he made a great debut album and then topped it with this superb follow-up. For the errant genius, *Attack Of The Mad Axeman* was a signature song. His solos in *Looking For Love* are mind-blowing. **PE**

What they said at the time: *"Superior heavy rock. An album with balls that should be played loud."* Record Mirror

DOOLITTLE

PIXIES

4AD, 1989



93

David Bowie found the Pixies "the most compelling music of the whole 1980s". And the 'quiet-loud' formula which Kurt Cobain confessed he cribbed was carefully honed here. Black Francis's feminine, disturbing scream and surreally vicious lyrics on the likes of *Debaser* brought mutilation into the mainstream. **NH**

What they said at the time: ***"Nothing is quite, thankfully, what it seems on* Doolittle*, and that's exactly what gives it a razor edge."*** *NME*

EMOTIONS IN MOTION

BILLY SQUIER

Capitol, 1982

92

Billy Squier's third album suffered in comparison for *not* being the multi-platinum *Don't Say No*, but as history shows it's *Emotions In Motion* that has the edge over its 1981 predecessor. Queen sing back-up vocals on the title track, and Andy Warhol created the cover, but it's the crisp songwriting that packs the real punch, not least in tracks like *Learn How To Live* and the sublime *In Your Eyes*. **PW**

FRANKS WILD YEARS

TOM WAITS

Island, 1987

91

The last of a loose trilogy of Tom Waits albums about dissolute musician Frank, which started with 1983's *Swordfishtrombones*, *Franks Wild Years* is in Bowie terms the *Lodger* of the three, underestimated because of its predecessors. Diseased Sinatra pastiches sit alongside ballads such as *Innocent When You Dream*. **NH**

What they said at the time: ***"He turns back the clock on all the manifold styles that make up music in America… and then he cocktails them."*** *Sounds*

GETTY X2

90 VIVID

LIVING COLOUR

Epic, 1988

Living Colour hit the New York streets in a blur of hard-rocking guitar fuzz, sledgehammer funk and political sloganeering. A smash hit single, *Cult Of Personality*, plus sampled speeches by John F Kennedy, Malcolm X and Franklin D Roosevelt, helped to fuel two million sales of their debut album, *Vivid*. Here, guitarist Vernon Reed retells their story.

What they said at the time: *"Living Colour's world vision may be in glorious technicolour, but they're the first to admit that a black rage sweeps through their music."* – *Sounds*

Q&A

What came first: the messages you wanted to send out or, the vehicle for their delivery?
Oh, the messages. *Vivid* was almost a diary for me. *Funny Vibe* came about following an incident in a department store, *Glamour Boys* was from shopping Downtown and *Open Letter (To A Landlord)* was indebted to gentrification.

A few years ago you told Classic Rock: *"Living Colour were unwilling to play by hard rock's rules and culture. Some felt that we were being provocative merely for existing."*
Well, my musical criteria have never been genre-driven. If a song is authentic, that's good enough for me.

Did it help that Anthrax, Maiden's Steve Harris and Lemmy of Motörhead all stood up for the band?
Absolutely. Lemmy was one of the first of the heavy guys to speak up about us. Robert Fripp has also been very complimentary about my guitar playing.

Why did Living Colour split up in 1995?
Things had started to go sideways. The departure of Muzz [Skillings, bassist] was a huge thing. Being in a confrontational Afro-American hard rock band and doing it for very little money was a hard sell.

And what brought about the reunion in late 2000?
I'm still asking myself that question.

Twenty-eight years on from your debut, have any of the things the band railed against improved?
At least the definition of rock'n'roll has expanded. I love the fact that it's no longer the exclusive domain of the white man. **DL**

ROBBIE ROBERTSON

ROBBIE ROBERTSON

Geffen, 1987

89

Various admirers (U2 and Peter Gabriel included) helped out on Robertson's debut, issued over a decade after The Band had signed off with *The Last Waltz*. Robertson allied his rootsy sensibilities to a heavily atmospheric and experimental approach, best served by *Broken Arrow* and *Somewhere Down The Crazy River*. **RH**

What they said at the time: ***"Robertson's abilities are still very much intact… [He] establishes himself as his own man."*** *Rolling Stone*

TATTOOED BEAT MESSIAH

ZODIAC MINDWARP AND THE LOVE REACTION

Vertigo, 1988

88

Messiah was the fever dream of *Flexi-Pop* mag designer Mark Manning, who came up with it while laying out a Spandau Ballet story while blasted on acid. The Love Reaction were filthy, hairy cretins, and the sounds they made were like AC/DC being sucked through a turbine engine, but somehow they made one of rock'n'roll's most holy artefacts. If Spinal Tap went up to 11, the Love Reaction went to 137 at least. **SG**

What they said at the time: ***"The biggest jerk in the world."*** *Kerrang!*

OUT OF THIS WORLD

EUROPE

Epic, 1988

87

The Final Countdown, a No.1 single in 25 countries in 1986, was a hard act to follow. But on *Out Of This World* were songs that David Coverdale would have sold his children for: power ballad *Open Your Heart*, and the Deep Purple-gone-AOR anthem *Superstitious*. **PE**

What they said at the time: ***"An Out Of This World album that, ultimately, finds itself struggling to leave the stratosphere."*** *Kerrang!*

The Godfathers: flew against the prevailing wind of acid house and glam-metal.

STREET TALK

STEVE PERRY

Columbia, 1984

86

By 1984, Journey were beginning an extended break that would last for another two years (and would include a substantial line-up shake-up before they returned with 1986's *Raised On Radio*). So what better way for singer Steve Perry to pass the time than to record a solo album? Titled *Street Talk*, it was his solo debut. The album's biggest hit, *Oh Sherrie*, written for his then-girlfriend Sherrie Swafford, reached No.1 on the US *Billboard* Rock chart. **GP**

What they said at the time: *"Pat Boone didn't understand, so why should Steve Perry – oversinging signifies not soul and inspiration but will and desperation."*
Christgau's Consumer Guide

THE LONESOME JUBILEE

JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP

Mercury, 1987

85

On the verge of dropping the 'Cougar' from his professional name, John Mellencamp secured his place in the American canon of blue-collar songwriters with *The Lonesome Jubilee*, a collection that reflects on death and disappointment and the passing of generations. Melancholy drifts through *Paper In Fire*, *Check It Out* and *The Real Life*, Mellencamp's voice ringing plaintive, pure and true. **JH**

What they said at the time: *"The Lonesome Jubilee suggests that the sources of people's unhappiness resides at least partly within themselves or, more disturbingly, in the fabric of life."*
Rolling Stone

EVERYBODY'S CRAZY

MICHAEL BOLTON

Columbia, 1985

84

AOR's golden decade suddenly had another rare gem when, in 1985 and with his fourth record, nearly man Michael Bolton nailed it at last. Always adept with a bridge here, a chorus there, now came the glorious melding of his talents, that giant voice dominating huge hooks such as on *Save Our Love*, *Can't Turn It Off* and *You Don't Want Me Bad Enough*. With this rowdy slice of soft rock supremacy, Bolton's unlikely journey to housewives' favourite began. **JH**

What they said at the time: *"Perhaps the strongest, most coherent vinyl achievement of its kind since Boston's debut or* Departure *by Journey."* *Kerrang!*

John Cougar Mellencamp: an album that secured his place in the American canon of blue-collar songwriters.

BIRTH, SCHOOL, WORK, DEATH

THE GODFATHERS

Epic, 1988

83

Following the filthy garage-rock of debut *Hit By Hit*, with *Birth, School, Work, Death* The Godfathers flew against the prevailing wind of acid house and glam-metal by invoking the kind of punkoid R&B patented by The Pretty Things and Dr. Feelgood, with heaps of sneery attitude. **RH**

What they said at the time: *"The Godfathers play truly scalding rock'n'roll like they were born to do it."* *Sounds*

BATTLE HYMNS

MANOWAR

Liberty, 1982

82

Like Kiss before them, Manowar were heavy metal superheroes; four muscle-bound, fur-clad warriors proclaiming 'Death to false metal'. *Battle Hymns*, their first and greatest album, delivered the requisite blood and thunder. Fittingly for music of such theatrical grandeur, Hollywood legend Orson Welles narrated the grisly tale of *Dark Avenger*. **PE**

What they said at the time: *"If anybody ever makes* Conan The Barbarian *into a musical, it should sound something like this"*
Record Mirror

WORKBOOK

BOB MOULD

Virgin/Omnivore, 1989

81

The suicide of Hüsker Dü's manager, heroin addiction of estranged bandmate Grant Hart and final failure of their band sent Bob Mould reeling into self-exile in a Minnesota farmhouse. His solo debut album, *Workbook 25*, veered between acoustic classicism, implacable electric guitars and howls into the hurricane, in some of the best and most confessional songs of his career. **NH**

What they said at the time: *"A genuine feeling of catharsis... by Mould's one-two punch of confessional honesty and guitar euphoria."* *Rolling Stone*

TAKING ON THE WORD

GUN
A&M 1989

80

In the 80s' days of rigidly defined genres, Gun's mix of pop and rock really stood out. They readily admitted to liking AC/DC, Def Leppard and Springsteen, as well as Simple Minds, Prince and especially INXS. "We always loved rock music with a dance feel," Gizzi reasons.

With a nervous smile, Gizzi recalls the precise moment he realised their album was something special. He and Rankin had been invited to a breakfast meeting with David Rose, the label's head of A&R. "We were afraid he might have bad news to break, but instead David said: 'You've got a great album here and the label's behind you. This could be the start of Gun becoming a popular band.'"

Rose was right. Due initially to the success of *Better Days*, Gun became familiar faces at the *Top Of The Pops* studios. "We did that show maybe five times," Gizzi estimates.Gun guys relished every last second of their golden era, which was crowned by an invitation to support the Rolling Stones on a long stretch of their Urban Jungle tour.

"Those guys invited us to their parties – we jammed on Muddy Waters and ZZ Top songs with Ronnie Wood," Gizzi says, marvelling at the memory. "I'm still pinching myself." **DL**

What they said at the time: *"Pop/rock at its finest, with a bucketful of soul and an epic feel."* RAW

THE CROSSING

BIG COUNTRY
Mercury 1983

79

Big Country pioneered a heroic new form of guitar rock that took the basic elements of traditional Celtic roots music and rolled them out on a widescreen canvas. The most identifiable songs on debut *The Crossing* – *Harvest Home, Fields Of Fire (400 Miles), In A Big Country* – sounded like rugged battle hymns, crackling with a rebellious kind of nobility. "I certainly felt that pop music hasn't used guitars in adventurous enough ways," Adamson said to *Smash Hits* on its release in 1983. "So we've tried to make different sounds, rather than just strumming chords with a screaming lead break in the middle."

There was, too, a cinematic debt to *The Crossing*, with its allusions to American westerns and the tacit acknowledgement of the score for *The Guns Of Navarone* on *Fields Of Fire*. Yet Adamson's lyrics often seemed highly personal. Big Country's rousing anthems spoke of hardship, struggle and lost innocence, of a resolute quest for beauty in a world left to ruin. These themes were tangible in the album's more downbeat moments, particularly *Chance* and *Close Action*. Meanwhile, enigmatic closing track *Porrohman*, an epic meditation on death and religion, hinted at something altogether proggier and experimental. **PE**

What they said at the time: "The Crossing *frequently achieves the epic drama it's after."*
Creem

SEA HAGS

SEA HAGS
Chrysalis, 1989

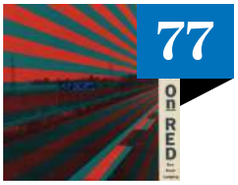
78

"We'll be the new Guns N' Roses if anyone wants to point that at us," said Sea Hags frontman Ron Yocom when the San Fran band's debut was released. Produced by Mike Clink, who'd done *Appetite For Destruction*, the Hags delivered genius-level sleaze rock. Undone by heroin, they never made a follow-up. **PE**

What they said at the time: *"This record is from the heart and the gutter."* *Kerrang!*

GAS FOOD LODGING

GREEN ON RED
Zippo, 1985



77

Tuscon's finest created an explosive roots-rock opus forged from the constituent parts of The Band, Meat Puppets and Neil Young at his woolliest. Chuck Prophet's untamed guitar lines were matched only by the primal howl of Dan Stuart's ravaged vocals. **RH**

What they said at the time: *"Total mastery…some songs could become classics."*
Sounds

Big Country: dreams stay with you.

ALL GETTY

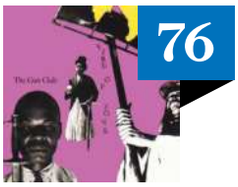
Killing Joke: post-punk rock in a nutshell.

GETTY x3

FIRE OF LOVE

THE GUN CLUB

Ruby, 1981



76

The fearsome debut from Jeffrey Lee Pierce's band assimilated punk, blues and psychobilly into an alternative history of US rock'n'roll. Released on tiny indie label Ruby, *Fire Of Love* pointed the way for a new generation of upstarts, not least the White Stripes. **RH**

What they said at the time: *"Demonic intensity grabs you by the throat."* *Melody Maker*

BRIAN WILSON

BRIAN WILSON

Sire, 1988

75

Brian Wilson was missing, presumed creatively dead for most of the 80s. He was in fact being controlled and exploited by his psychiatrist Eugene Landy, which overshadowed this album's reputation. But it also contains the *Smile*-style Americana saga *Rio Grande*, and the signature Wilson sentiment of *Love And Mercy* – still his best songwriting since the 70s. **NH**

What they said at the time: *"A stunning reminder of what pop's been missing all these years."* *Rolling Stone*

SOUTHERN ACCENTS

TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS

MCA, 1985

74

Petty's biggest hit of the 80s was *Full Moon Fever*, produced by Jeff Lynne, and nominally a solo album. His best record of that decade was *Southern Accents*, with its glorious, Dixie-referencing anthem *Rebels*, hypnotic left-field single *Don't Come Around Here No More* and the beautiful, elegiac title track. **PE**

What they said at the time: *"Petty's roots album, but the accents here aren't exactly orthodox southern rock."* *Creem*

COPPERHEAD ROAD

STEVE EARLE

MCA, 1988

73

Eschewing the heartland country rock that had marked his first two albums, Steve Earle described *Copperhead Road* as "heavy metal bluegrass". Factor in some Celtic folk, a guest spot from The Pogues and a large dose of anti-war polemic and the end result was glorious, although less easily digestible. **RH**

What they said at the time: *"Harder hitting than either of its predecessors… a raw-knuckled dose of rock'n'roll."* *Rolling Stone*

SLAM

DAN REED NETWORK

Mercury, 1989

72

It should have been their *Slippery When Wet*. Instead the Network's second album became a lost classic; a funk rock *tour de force* produced by Chic's Nile Rodgers and lit up with so many great songs, from rump-shakers *Tiger In A Dress* and *Make It Easy* to beautiful ballads *Rainbow Child* and *Stronger Than Steel*. **PE**

What they said at the time: *"Before, rock was never this funky, funk never this rocking."* *Sounds*

LONG COLD WINTER

CINDERELLA

Mercury, 1988

71

Viewed in retrospect, this appears to be a trend-setting record, with Cinderella abandoning the cheery hair metal of *Night Songs* for an album of darkness and depth. It was far from grunge. *Gypsy Road* and *The Last Mile* are perfectly pitched cock-rock, while *Don't Know What You've Got (Til It's Gone)* is a tearful, heart-on-sleeve ballad. The tone, though, is adult, and it marked the arrival of Tom Keifer as a writer of some talent. **JH**

What they said at the time: *"Exhibits an admirable willingness to take a stab at something different."* *Rolling Stone*

Squeeze: unleashed by *East*.

KILLING JOKE

KILLING JOKE

E.G., 1980

For many, Killing Joke's eponymous debut would be the ultimate blueprint for heavy music in the post-punk landscape. Geordie Walker's solo-free guitar wash allied to Paul Ferguson's tribal drumming, the dub depth, Chic-informed bass lines of Youth and Jaz Coleman's coal-black apocalyptic vocals and keyboard moods created a sound latterly adopted, nurtured or fed upon by Manson, Nirvana and Metallica. **IF**

What they said at the time: ***"Killing Joke have an edge of violence crucial to their music."*** *NME*

UNMASKED

KISS

Casablanca, 1980

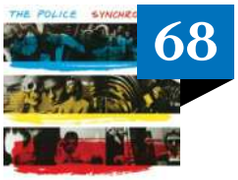
Although Kiss mainman Paul Stanley would subsequently disown *Unmasked* – stating bluntly that "We lost our balls" – it's a great pop-rock record, like *Dynasty* before it. On two songs, *Tomorrow* and *Shandi*, Stanley himself achieved power-pop perfection. And Ace Frehley's *Torpedo Girl* is a unique marker where genius and insanity meet. **PE**

What they said at the time: ***"Only Simmons seems to comprehend that Kiss are really a pantomime based on a rock group."*** *NME*

SYNCHRONICITY

THE POLICE

A&M, 1983



With their fifth – and final – album of engaging but inscrutable pop-rock, The Police finally ascended to the premier league. The fact that *Synchronicity* included four enormous hit singles – *Wrapped Around Your Finger*, *King Of Pain*, *Every Breath You Take* and *Synchronicity II* – didn't do any harm. Even the more experimental material on the album – and the trio's mutual loathing – didn't stop them becoming the world's biggest band. **PL**

What they said at the time: ***"A record of real passion that is impossible to truly decipher."*** *NME*

JUJU

SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES

Polydor, 1981

The Mark II Banshees' defining moment dragged goth kicking and screaming into the mainstream. From its vinyl A-side's chart-busting hits (*Spellbound*, *Arabian Nights*) to its darker flip-side (*Night Shift*, *Voodoo Dolly*), the addition of Budgie's strident percussion and John McGeoch's evocative guitar broadened the band's cult appeal and transformed the enigmatic Siouxsie into an icon. **IF**

What they said at the time: ***"Intriguing, intense, brooding and powerfully atmospheric."*** *Sounds*

Jeffrey Lee Pierce with The Gun Club assimilated punk, blues and psychobilly.

EAST SIDE STORY

SQUEEZE

A&M, 1981

East Side Story saw the South London band ditch the 'new wave' tag and match commercial reward with critical acclaim. Songwriters Glenn Tilbrook and Chris Difford were even hailed as the latter-day Lennon & McCartney for their endless flow of deft melodies and adroit lyrics. Indeed their only rival in the witty songcraft stakes, Elvis Costello, was the co-producer of this, Squeeze's fourth album, alongside his own producer Roger Bechirian. Ranging from rockabilly to country, psychedelia to blue-eyed soul, the singles *Labelled With Love*, *Tempted* and *Is That Love?* were just the tip of an eclectic iceberg. **PL**

What they said at the time: ***"An album that harkens back to the halcyon era of English studio experimentation."*** *Creem*

DISINTEGRATION

THE CURE

Fiction, 1989

Burnt by the fame The Cure had garnered with 1985's *The Head On The Door*, mainman Robert Smith did his best to reverse the juggernaut on *Disintegration*, reverting to the doomy production of early times, shovelling down hallucinogens and refusing to speak during sessions at Hook End Manor in order to create a "slightly unpleasant environment". It didn't work: the shimmering *Pictures Of You*, the bleakly beautiful *Lovesong* and the unsettling *Lullaby* were all too hooky to lurk in a subterranean goth club, and they dragged *Disintegration* to The Cure's best-ever sales. **HY**

What they said at the time: ***"Eleven years and eight studio albums in, [Smith] is still playing the confused adolescent adrift in suburban heartbreak."*** *Q*

Talking Heads: a dazzling display of looped grooves and dextrous musicianship.

GETTY X 2

PSYCHOCANDY

THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN

Blanco Y Negro, 1985

64

Arriving four months after Live Aid, the Mary Chain's debut album of feedback-drenched guitar noise was like a splash of cold water on the face, an invigorating antidote to stadium bombast and boring, beige chart pop.

Finding a middle ground between 60s girl groups and 70s nihilism, they were a sort of unholy fusion of the Shangri-La's and The Stooges. *Just Like Honey* was a delicious drizzle, *My Little Underground* a call to arms from the new indie generation. **PL**

What they said at the time: ***"Rooted so specifically in a New York situated exactly halfway between the Velvet Underground and The Ramones."*** *Melody Maker*

EARTHSHAKER

Y&T

A&M, 1981

63

A new decade and the change of name from the whimsical *Yesterday And Today* to the more succinct *Y&T* ushered in a new era for the Californian band. An altogether tougher proposition than their previous two records (less soft-focus band portraits, more grandstanding guitars and vocals), the songs were punchy and precise, the colour and musical dexterity baffling at times. It was the start of a strong run of albums for the band, but Y&T would never be this good again. **PW**

What they said at the time: ***"Y&T went from mediocre beginnings to full-blooded, hot-rockin', barnstormin' metal maestros."*** *Sounds*

WELCOME TO HELL

VENOM

Neat, 1981

62

'Don't be a prophet in your own land,' the old proverb runs. And how true it proved for Newcastle's Venom, the band that, with *Welcome To Hell*, invented a genre that flourished globally without them. It's hard to overstate the shock of hearing this in 1981, a discordant, angry and gleefully horrific record made in a style so new it had no name. Venom called it black metal. Within *In League With Satan* was the dark throb that equipped a generation, while *Witching Hour* contains the first iterations of all kinds of thrash sub-strains. *Welcome To Hell* remains key to understanding all that followed. **JH**

What they said at the time: ***"Brings new meaning to the word cataclysmic."*** *Sounds*

REMAIN IN LIGHT

TALKING HEADS

Sire, 1980

61

Talking Heads' quantum creative leaps between albums culminated in this, their fourth, the apotheosis of their assimilation of world music and African polyrhythms.

The Cure: by turns bleakly beautiful, shimmering and unsettling.

Enabled by producer Brian Eno, *Remain In Light* was a dazzling display of looped grooves and dextrous musicianship, from the frazzled art funk of *Crosseyed And Painless* to the mesmeric, near-psychedelic *Houses In Motion*. Meanwhile, frontman David Byrne effected the transition from exaggerated Mr Normal to a sort of unhinged preacher. **PL**

What they said at the time: ***"Approaching a strong funk that you last heard at length on [Funkadelic's]*** **One Nation Under A Groove.***"* *NME*

DEFACE THE MUSIC

UTOPIA

Bearsville, 1980

60

Utopia followed the opposite trajectory to The Beatles: their 1974 debut was a complex-prog meisterwerk, but by their sixth album they were purveying three-minute pop nuggets.

The Beatles-esque *Deface The Music* was a tribute to the Fabs by Beatlemaniac Todd Rundgren and his band. Arranged chronologically, from mop-top rave-up *I Just Want To Touch You*, through the more harmonically sophisticated (and *Eleanor Rigby*-ish) *Life Goes On*, to *Strawberry Fields Forever/I Am The Walrus* hybrid *Everybody Else Is Wrong*, this compressed The Beatles' career into 13 succinct homages. **PL**

What they said at the time: ***"Beatlemaniacs will either froth or fume."*** *Rolling Stone*

MIRAGE

FLEETWOOD MAC

Warner 1982

59

Mirage's general tone was all glistening, harpsichord-like keyboards, and a feeling of cool, gliding simplicity – a contrast with the jagged edges of Tusk. Buckingham slipped in a few experimental moments on the bustling New York tribute *Empire State*, and there are some gorgeous tunes, McVie's album-bookending *Love In Store* and especially *Wish You Were Here* among them, while her *Hold Me* proved one of the band's biggest hits. Nicks, too, chipped in with *Gypsy*, a tribute to her and Buckingham's early, bohemian days together, which is Mirage's most enduring song. **NH**

What they said at the time: ***"Sounds great both in the morning and fine over a sunset with wine."*** *Rolling Stone*

From sneer to eternity: Billy's MTV-friendly style creates a star.

ALL GETTY

REBEL YELL

BILLY IDOL

Chrysalis, 1983

58

With his second album, featuring the title track and electra-gliding ballad *Eyes Without A Face*, Billy Idol became the biggest British star of the USA's early MTV era. All black leather, spiky blond hair and sneer, he was a one-man Elvis, Iggy and Jim Morrison, bringing a palatable version of punk rebellion to Middle America. For some it was a too-polished amalgam of pop hooks and new-wave smarts, although there was little denying the catchy, slashing riffs from Idol sidekick guitarist Steve Stevens. **PL**

What they said at the time: ***"Vaguely anthemic, vaguely riffy tunes, eminently fit for one's less-alert moments of pop consumption."*** *Creem*

RAGE FOR ORDER

QUEENSRŸCHE

EMI America, 1986

57

With their first album *The Warning*, Queensrÿche came on like the new Judas Priest. On the follow-up, the Seattle band went deep into new territory, with a more progressive rock mind-set allied to state-of-the-art production. As a result, *Rage For Order* was one of the most bold and brilliant metal albums of its time, with explosive heavy songs such as *Walk In The Shadows* alongside dark mood pieces, notably the sinister *Gonna Get Close To You*, originally written and recorded by oddball Canadian singer Lisa Dalbello. **PE**

What they said at the time: ***"Continually pushing at the boundaries of their ability, continually thriving on the variety of their turbulent sound."*** *Kerrang!*

THE LAST IN LINE

DIO

Vertigo, 1984

56

Ronnie James Dio was one of the greatest heavy metal singers that ever lived, and every studio album he made between 1975 and 1984 became a classic in its own right – first with Rainbow, then Black Sabbath, and finally with the band he created in his own image. The second Dio album, *The Last In Line*, had all the power and mystique of the debut, *Holy Diver*, with the galloping *We Rock* a defining anthem, and two *Stargazer*-sized epic pieces in the title track and *Egypt (The Chains Are On)*. **PE**

Queensrÿche vocalist Geoff Tate, when he was all the rage.

What they said at the time: ***"Listen to* We Rock *and you can feel the swell of Ronnie's chest."*** *Kerrang!*

CORRIDORS OF POWER

GARY MOORE

Virgin, 1982

55

On his third solo album, the Irishman came screaming into his heavy period, armed with songs stockpiled during his tenure with Greg Lake and backed by the thunderous rhythm section of Ian Paice and Neil Murray. Thumpers like *Don't Take Me For A Loser* and the foot-down *Rockin' Every Night* had the listener clinging on by the fingernails, but even those were sluggish compared to *End Of The World*, whose neo-classical intro came on like a gauntlet being slapped down four years after *Eruption*. Respect to Moore's later, more critically garlanded *Still Got The Blues*, but that's tame stuff by comparison. **HY**

What they said at the time: ***"Moore's solos are indeed works of art."*** *Guitar World*

GEORGIA SATELLITES

THE GEORGIA SATELLITES

Elektra, 1986

54

Southern rock went down a storm during the 70s, thanks to jam-the-night-away bands such as the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd. But by the 80s, southern rock had taken a back seat to other, more popular genres. For one glorious moment, however, the Georgia Satellites seemed to be the genre's saviours, and almost single-handedly kept "rock with a down-home twang" alive with their self-titled debut album. And the way they did so was not with never-ending guitar solos, but with succinct songs, especially the big hit *Keep Your Hands To Yourself* and a spirited cover of the obscure *Battleship Chains*. But the band couldn't stretch their commercial success, and are nowadays neatly filed under the dreaded 'one-hit wonder' category. **GP**

What they said at the time: ***"A 1980s twist into three-chord updates of Chuck Berry, the Rolling Stones, Little Feat and the Faces."*** *New York Times*

BAD ENGLISH

BAD ENGLISH
Epic, 1989

53

With Journey taking an excruciatingly long time between albums by the late 80s, two Journey men (guitarist Neal Schon and keyboard player Jonathan Cain) teamed up with two of The Babys (singer John Waite and bassist Ricky Phillips) to form Bad English. It wasn't much of a surprise that Bad English's music was a merger of the two, especially on the two US hit power ballads *When I See You Smile* (which reached No.1) and *Price Of Love*. But with grunge rising, Bad English spoiled after only one more album, 1991's underwhelming *Backlash*, before Waite eventually resumed his solo career and Journey reunited briefly with Steve Perry. **GP**

ENUFF Z'NUFF

ENUFF Z'NUFF
Atco, 1989

52

It seemed appropriate that Enuff Z'Nuff came out of Illinois, given the brickbats they received comparing them (unfairly) to that State's pioneering power pop sons, Cheap Trick. Championed by A&R guru Derek Shulman (Bon Jovi) on his resurrected Atco label, Enuff Z'Nuff achieved initial chart success with the effervescent *New Thing* and the chiming *Fly High Michelle*, while the album was peppered with colourful gems such as *For Now* and *Hot Little Summer Girl*. The following *Strength* album would be better still, but they'd not climb these commercial heights again. **PW**

What they said at the time: ***'Dares to ask the question: What if the next Beatles were a hard-partying hair band?'*** *Rolling Stone*

TWO STEPS FROM THE MOVE

HANOI ROCKS
CBS, 1984

51

Upon the release of their magnum opus *Two Steps From The Move*, it was fair to say the world lay at hard-living Hanoi Rocks' feet. But as they teetered on the brink of going global, heart'n'soul drummer Razzle was killed in DUI Vince Neil's speeding car and the dream was over. From its finely tooled ballads (*Don't You Ever Leave Me*), through its all-out rockers (*Futurama*) to *Underwater World*'s *'Welcome to the jungle'* refrain, every last nuance of Hanoi's Faces-tinged glam-metal masterpiece was latterly adopted by Guns N' Roses. **IF**

What they said at the time: ***"Hanoi Rocks rock'n'roll like they just invented it."***
Melody Maker

Hanoi Rocks. "A glam masterpiece."

GETTY X2

EMPTY GLASS

PETE TOWNSHEND
Atco, 1980

50

Pete Townshend's first proper solo album is a tough, acutely personal pop record, and fleeting proof that he could cut it without The Who. It's hard to imagine Roger Daltrey singing *'I wanna bite and kiss ya…'* as Townshend does on the hit single *Rough Boys*, exploring a homosexual encounter (*And I Moved*) or facing down rock critics Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons (*Jools And Jim*) with quite such conviction. *Empty Glass* is still the best non-Who album Pete Townshend has ever made. **MB**

What they said at the time: ***"An old man giving himself a new lease of life."*** NME

Dynamite: Klaus Meine and the Scorpions.

BLACKOUT

SCORPIONS
Harvest/EMI, 1982

49

While 1984's *Love At First Sting* catapulted the veteran German metal band into the stratosphere, it was previous album *Blackout* that set it all up perfectly. Walking the line between tunes that could be cranked on the radio (*No One Like You*, *Arizona*) and those that required some serious headbanging (the title track, *Dynamite*), *Blackout* was also the album where guitarist Matthias Jabs truly came into his own, putting the large, lingering shadows of former Scorpions guitarists Uli Jon Roth and Michael Schenker behind him. And one mustn't forget the album cover image, which adorned many a denim jacket at the time. **GP**

What they said at the time: ***"The overall effect is so audaciously over-the-top that it works anyway."*** *Rolling Stone*

AVALON

ROXY MUSIC

Polydor, 1982

48

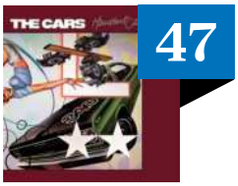
Roxy Music's first album since 1980's *Flesh + Blood* was a far cry from rock's usual rawness. One long, etiolated sigh, it wafted between limpid balladry and a sort of slow-motion disco. Varnished almost to the point of invisibility, it was dismissed as ersatz muzak for the vapid nouveau riche from the one-time masters of postmodern derring-do. But for those in the (languid) mood, *More Than This* and the rest were evanescent perfection. **PL**

What they said at the time: ***"A shimmer of easy hypnosis that is as beautiful as it is lacking in fire."*** *Sounds*

HEARTBEAT CITY

THE CARS

Elektra, 1984



47

It was a perfect match: new-wave hipsters The Cars plus über-producer Robert John 'Mutt' Lange (AC/DC, Def Leppard, Foreigner). And it resulted in a perfect album.

Heartbeat City was a seamless fusion of art-rock, power-pop and AOR. Lead single *You Might Think* had The Cars' quirky signature sound, but on *Hello Again* the band were barely present (around Ric Ocasek's vocals it's all Lange's trickery), and *Drive*, sung by bassist Benjamin Orr, was the most immaculately textured rock ballad since 10cc's *I'm Not In Love*. **PE**

What they said at the time: ***"A perfect example of forward-looking contemporary pop."*** *Rolling Stone*

PRETENDERS

PRETENDERS

Real, 1980

46

She'd been peripheral. Sure, you'd heard of her: Akron sassy, she'd written for *NME*, worked at McLaren and Westwood's SEX, almost managed to form a succession of great punk bands, Chrissie Hynde was rock's 'nearly' girl. Then this happened.

Released seven days into the new decade, here was sharp, intelligent, classy mid-Atlantic pop-rock with one foot forward and the other rooted in Kinks-literate old-wave classicism. Street-smart, but with lashings of Brill Building nous, Detroit-leaning chutzpah. *Brass In Pocket*, that voice… It flew straight to No.1. How could it not? **IF**

What they said at the time: ***"A classic debut album."*** *Zigzag*

BLOOD & CHOCOLATE

ELVIS COSTELLO AND THE ATTRACTIONS

Demon, 1986

45

There was almost literally blood on the floor. The Attractions were seething after being sidelined for *King Of America*'s restrained Americana, and about to be sacked. Costello channelled this frustration into his most brutal, claustrophobic record. *Tokyo Storm Warning* was the kamikaze first single, *I Want You* was a psychotic love song like nothing else in rock. It all made for a savage, commercially disastrous climax to his work with perhaps punk's greatest rock'n'roll band. **NH**

What they said at the time: ***"[Costello's] most stark, honest record since* Trust."** *NME*

POINT OF ENTRY

JUDAS PRIEST

Columbia 1981

44

Every great band has an unsung classic. Judas Priest's is *Point Of Entry*, a masterful album that has long been overshadowed by the career-defining hits that came before and after it – specifically 1980's *British Steel* and 1982's *Screaming For Vengeance*. *Point Of Entry* had a classy hard rock sound, which was a welcome departure from the band's typically gonzoid heavy metal. It featured three of the greatest songs Priest ever recorded: *Heading Out To The Highway*, *Solar Angels* and *Desert Plains*. And the single *Hot Rockin'* came with the most hilariously over-literal heavy rock video of all time. **PE**

What they said at the time: ***"These guys are stupid in the same sense that Ronald Reagan is unelectable."*** *Creem*

DEAD RINGER

MEAT LOAF

Epic 1981

43

Regarded aside from the shadow of *Bat Out Of Hell*, *Dead Ringer* was a worthy successor to it. Certainly it's the only other record Meat Loaf and Steinman have made since, together or apart, that has come within touching distance of its greatness. The near-title track, on which Meat Loaf traded lines with Cher, was an obvious high point at the time, but others have aged better. Two in particular, *I'm Gonna Love Her For Both Of Us* and *I'll Kill You If You Don't Come Back*.

"Meat 'anywhere he wants to' Loaf is waxing rhapsodic once more." *Creem*

THE UPLIFT MOFO PARTY PLAN

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

EMI, 1987

42

It was on the Red Hot Chili Peppers' third album, *The Uplift Mofo Party Plan*, that the group's punk-meets-funk merger truly fused – with awesome results. The energy of tracks such as *Fight Like A Brave*, *Backwoods*, and *Skinny Sweaty Man* remain gloriously hyper all these years later, while the gorgeous psychedelic pop of *Behind The Sun* proved that the band was no one-trick pony. You can pinpoint this album and their next, *Mother's Milk*, as the inspiration for all of those funk-metal acts that thrived afterwards. **GP**

What they said at the time: ***"A band that's in command on stage but in trouble in the studio."*** *LA Times*

MURMUR

R.E.M.

I.R.S., 1983

41

As synth-pop looked set to dominate the 80s, R.E.M. were part of a guitar resistance movement in the States, joining the Dream Syndicate and Hüsker Dü in mixing 60s rock's melodic virtues with a punk mentality. But guitarist Peter Buck recalled that it was his band REM who quickly became the "touchstone". This debut LP's title accurately described Michael Stipe's mystique-shrouded vocals, and the shimmering, rural southern atmosphere and ringing, Byrds-style jangle of its sound. **NH**

What they said at the time: ***"The result sounds both familiar and wholly original."*** *Creem*

DISCIPLINE

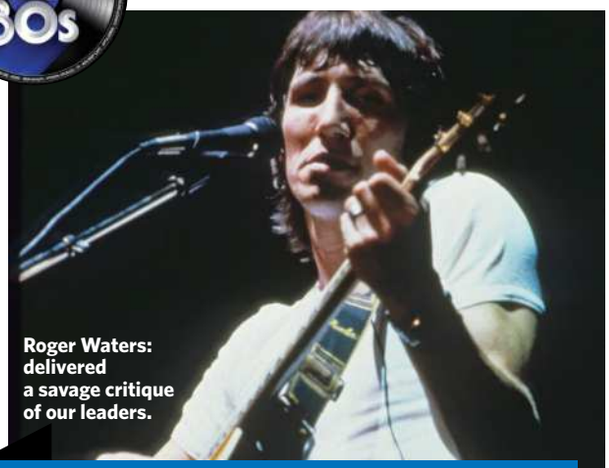
KING CRIMSON

E.G., 1981

40

Crimson's first album for seven years could have found them hopelessly adrift of contemporary developments. Instead it was utterly in tune, specifically with the technoid funk and mutant disco of Talking Heads and David Byrne/Brian Eno's spin-off project. Indeed Adrian Belew's vocals throughout were distinctly Byrne-ish, while album opener *Elephant Talk* could have appeared on *Remain In Light*. The rest of the record alternated between hard and heavy rhythms, intricate guitar play and haunting third-world experiments. **PL**

What they said at the time: ***"Musically, not bad – the Heads meet the League Of Gentlemen."*** *Christgau's Consumer Guide*



Roger Waters: delivered a savage critique of our leaders.

39 THE FINAL CUT

PINK FLOYD

Harvest, 1983

As a Pink Floyd album, *The Final Cut* was a bit of a disappointment. But looking through a different lens, it's a great start to Roger Waters's solo career, and should be reappraised as such.

Here, the rest of the Floyd are scarcely on the album. Rick Wright is absent, having left the band three years earlier, although most fans were unaware that Pink Floyd were now a trio until they checked the credits. Both David Gilmour and Nick Mason were reduced to the roles of session men. Mason said: "It was a ghastly period with Roger, being treated more and more like a useless bit of kit and him wanting to take the whole thing over and saying menacingly: 'If we want to make another record it will be different after this.'"

Waters was certainly not in a good place. He was still bruised after a bout of artistic fisticuffs with film producer Alan Parker over the film of *The Wall*, his prevailing mood angry and bitter, resentful towards his bandmates, and things weren't improved by the recent conflict between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands.

But when it came to channelling all this bile into *A Requiem For The Post War Dream*, as *The Final Cut* was subtitled, Waters delivered a savage critique of our leaders and the games they play to keep them in power. He was not about to tolerate any dissent, either. "The fact was that *I* was making this record. Dave didn't like it and he said so. There wasn't any room for anyone else to be writing. I didn't play any guitar solos, Dave didn't write any lyrics."

The Final Cut expands on *The Wall* but this time it's personal, Waters honing in on the death of the father he never knew at the Battle of Anzio in 1944 and then focusing his ire on the Falklands War.

The vitriol rains down unrelentingly, from the opening *Post War Dream*, with its caustic attack on the nature of war, to the dark humour of *The Fletcher Memorial Home* where Waters spits out his condemnation of the world's *'incurable tyrants'*, Thatcher, Galtieri, Reagan and Brezhnev among them.

While there are no radio-friendly tunes to sweeten the pill, there's plenty of audio drama, at which Waters is a master, heightened by a new holophonic sound technique that has you ducking for cover as a missile flies over your head. **HF**

What they said at the time: ***"This may be art rock's crowning masterpiece."*** *Rolling Stone*

GETTY X2

FRONTIERS

Journey

Columbia, 1983

38

How the heck were Journey going to follow up the gargantuan success of 1981's *Escape*? Easy – by following the same melodic rock/tender ballad blueprint of its predecessor.

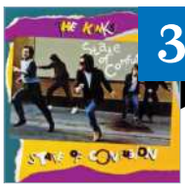
Which was precisely what they did with *Frontiers*. And while some veteran rock acts were slow to embrace the fast-rising music video format and recognise the clout of MTV, Journey were wise enough to use it to their advantage – with the popular (yet now inadvertently hilarious/dated) clip for the rocking *Separate Ways (Worlds Apart)*. Elsewhere you'll find *Faithfully*, a tune that caused many a tear and a tender embrace on the dancefloors of high-school proms coast-to-coast. **GP**

What they said at the time: ***"A high level of musicianship, but little [to learn] beyond how smart guys play heavy metal."*** *Rolling Stone*

STATE OF CONFUSION

THE KINKS

Arista, 1983



37

Banned from touring the US in the late 60s, The Kinks spent the late 70s clawing back lost ground, peaking with *State Of Confusion*. The very English *Come Dancing* was their biggest hit since *Lola*, and the album triumphantly retooled the sensitivity, wit, paranoia and raw power of their 60s best for Reagan's USA, in a highly personal stadium-rock classic. **NH**

What they said at the time: ***"No band but The Kinks could have made such a record in 1983, and no band deserves more to be at the very top."*** *Rolling Stone*

SURFING WITH THE ALIEN

JOE SATRIANI

Relativity, 1987

36

Almost 10 years after Van Halen, it took a destitute former guitar teacher to give the instrument its next quantum leap. Joe Satriani was the technical equal of anyone on the shred scene, but tracks like *Always With Me, Always With You* put melody front-and-centre, while *Satch Boogie* prized groove over chops. The absence of a human larynx meant that *Alien* could never go fully mainstream, but its US No.29 placing proved that this instrumental benchmark wasn't being bought only by guitar nerds. **HY**

What they said at the time: ***"Not only does he write melodies – he fucking edits them."*** *Christgau's Consumer Guide*

THE PROS AND CONS OF HITCH HIKING

ROGER WATERS

Harvest, 1984

35

Based on a mostly baffling concept – but something to do with a midlife crisis – Waters presented this idea to his then-Pink Floyd bandmates in 1977, who rejected it in favour of *The Wall*. Resurrected as his first solo album, *The Pros* had a revitalised Eric Clapton on guitar. Reviled upon release, as much for its soft-porn cover as anything, it sounds as ominously imposing as Waters's best work with Floyd. **PR**

What they said at the time: ***"I can't imagine anyone will sit more than once through this faintly hideous record."*** *Rolling Stone*

DUKE

GENESIS

Charisma, 1980

34

Sadly it was Phil Collins's first marriage imploding that was the catalyst for Genesis blowing up the charts. After years of burying their emotions under a tsunami of arpeggios and paradiddles, on *Duke* Collins and co. wrote about love and heartache. *Turn It On Again*, *Man Of Our Times* and *Misunderstanding* were sterling prog-pop songs, with clever bits for the 'air' keyboard players and proper tunes for *Top Of The Pops* viewers who'd never heard *The Return Of The Giant Hogweed* – and probably never would. **MB**

What they said at the time: ***"It sorely misses Peter Gabriel's perverse wit… but Genesis aren't for an exodus yet."*** *Rolling Stone*

FREEDOM

NEIL YOUNG

Reprise, 1989

33

By his own admission, the 80s were tough for Neil Young, marked by a succession of wildly erratic albums that tested the loyalty of even his staunchest fans, and reaching a nadir when his own label, Geffen, sued him for making "unrepresentative" music. *Freedom*, half-electric rock and half-acoustic, averted the slump. *Crime In The City* and *Eldorado* offered ample evidence that Young's muse hadn't yet deserted him, but the record's centrepiece was *Rockin' In The Free World*, so good he included it twice. **RH**

What they said at the time: ***"A classic Neil Young album, deploying the folk ditties and rock gallumph that made him famous."*** *Village Voice*

DRAMA

YES

Atlantic, 1980

32

The prog behemoths' tenth album was one of their most controversial, marking the departure of Jon Anderson and Rick Wakeman. With previously booked tour dates to fill, a new line-up and album had to materialise – fast. Cue the arrival into the Yes line-up of Trevor Horn and Geoff Downes, the duo who as Buggles had just been at No.1 in the charts with their new-wave smash *Video Killed The Radio Star*, and who were with the Yes's management. But instead of foppish synth-pop, *Drama* was a showcase for surging metallic riffs and virtuosic technoflash. Thunderous 10-minute opener *Machine Messiah* alone was worth the price of admission, while *Into The Lens* was classic tempo-shifting, multipartite Yes. **PL**

What they said at the time: ***"Yes sound more like Yes here than they recently have with their classic members."*** *Sputnik Music*

NEW YORK

LOU REED

Sire 19889

31

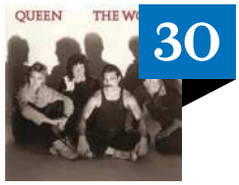
Arriving in the first week of 1989, *New York* was an angry love letter, a biting indictment, an open-hearted outpouring of empathy, despair, resignation, fury and outrage that fully utilised Reed's intimidating powers of poetic communication to tackle racism, child abuse, Aids, environmental issues, urban decay and more. Lou was aflame with self-righteous passion, yet his coal-black, bone-dry humour marked his every pronouncement. Never better lyrically, this startling erudition demanded an apposite backdrop. **IF**

What they said at the time: ***"New York marks a welcome return to the wild side for the veteran Velvet Underground founder and street bard."*** *Hits*

THE WORKS

QUEEN

EMI, 1984



30

By the mid-80s, Queen needed to get their career back on track. Their previous LP, the discofied bacchanalia of *Hot Space*, was the ultimate musical identity crisis – one which lost them half their audience overnight.

Their solution was to return to basics for *The Works*, a record which took the anything-goes approach of the 70s and gave it a sleek 80s makeover. Here they swished between retro-futuristic synth pop (*Radio Gaga*), balls-out rockers (*Hammer To Fall, Tear It Up*) and perfectly formed chart-pop (*I Want To Break Free, It's A Hard Life*). *The Works* wasn't just their best album of the 80s – it also set the stage for Live Aid and the mother of all career resurrections. **DE**

What they said at the time: ***"A royal feast of hard rock without that awful metallic aftertaste; as such, it might turn out to be the* Led Zeppelin II *of the eighties."*** *Rolling Stone*

LET IT BE

THE REPLACEMENTS

Twin/Tone, 1984

29

Minneapolis misfits The Replacements made their reputation with rowdy rock'n'roll that swung from the inspired to the downright sloppy. Three albums in, however, they'd started to become tired of the formula. *Let It Be* revealed leader Paul Westerberg to be a sensitive and articulate songwriter when the mood struck, particularly on *Unsatisfied* and the spare *Androgynous*. Meanwhile, minor classics such as *I Will Dare* and *Answering Machine* proved they'd lost none of their raw power. **RH**

What they said at the time: ***"A brilliant rock'n'roll album: as loose as it is deliberate, as pretty as it is hard rocking."*** *Rolling Stone*

LOVE JUNK

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Chrysalis, 1988

28

Pity TPOH's mainman Moe Berg. Had this debut been released three years later, after *Nevermind*, his knowing songs about post-adolescent sex and yearning and his Todd Rundgren-produced thumping power pop might have found a bigger audience. To the faithful few, though, the witty, poignant *I'm An Adult Now*, *Ten Fingers* and *She's So Young* played like the glorious soundtrack to an imaginary John Hughes movie: *Still Pretty In Pink*, perhaps? **MB**

What they said at the time: ***"Literate, wise, poignant and irremediably horny… Delightful and surprising from beginning to end."*** *Trouser Press*

Motörhead: no sleep with their glorious racket going on.

ORGASMATRON

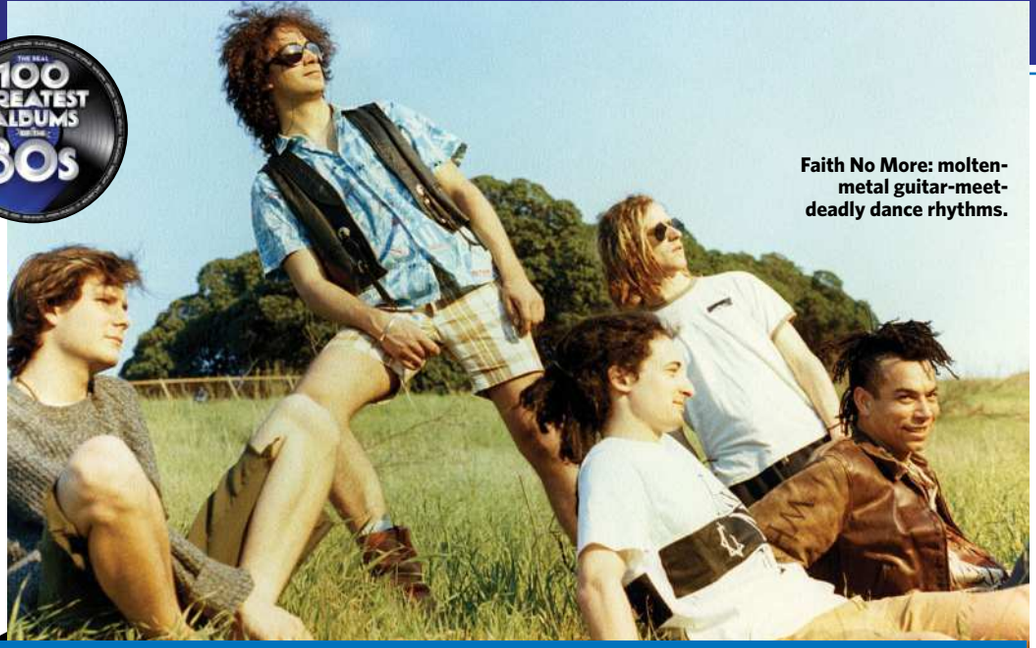
MOTÖRHEAD

GWR, 1986

27

Motörhead's primal brutality had been proved on six albums before Bill Laswell brought his trademark production magic to *Orgasmatron*. When things bludgeoned along at speed (propelled by drummer Pete Gill, playing on his only complete album behind Lemmy, Phil Campbell and Würzel) there was more bottom-end power, but the real fireworks were saved for a closing title track where every detail was finessed into a swirling, psychedelic maelstrom. As Lemmy inhabited the role of insatiable grim reaper the band pounded onward at a relentless marching pace as deliberate as cold-blooded premeditated murder. **IF**

What they said at the time: ***"Louder, faster, harder."*** *Los Angeles Times*



Faith No More: molten-metal guitar-meet-deadly dance rhythms.

FAITH NO MORE/PRESS

26 INTRODUCE YOURSELF

FAITH NO MORE

Slash, 1987

Rap, heavy metal, post-punk, new wave and funk. Somehow, someway, Faith No More made sense of these five tricky musical ingredients on their second album, *Introduce Yourself*. While quite a few alt.rock bands of the era were starting to lean – albeit cautiously – towards the 'rockier' side of things, FNM were one of the first bands of the genre to feature unapologetic Sabbath-style guitar riffing, from the great Big Sick Ugly Jim Martin. A re-recording of the title track of their debut album, *We Care A Lot*, earned FNM their first bit of radio/MTV play, the title track was their most explosive yet, while Martin's guitar was front-and-centre on *The Crab Song*. Add singer Chuck Mosley's on-key/off-key vocals to the mix and you had a daring sound unlike anything else circa 1987. **GP**

What they said at the time: ***"A breathtaking harmonisation of molten-metal guitar, deadly dance rhythms and poignant, pointed lyrics, the sound of a band with no precedent."*** *Sounds*

25 SIGNALS

RUSH

Mercury, 1982

Within three years and across three records – *Permanent Waves* to *Moving Pictures* and then *Signals* – Rush evolved and transformed. Their space-opera past was a thing of adolescent glory; here and now was a mature rock band defining and redefining itself. For some, *Signals* leans too far towards Geddy Lee's synthesisers, yet it's an album that almost forced guitarist Alex Lifeson to reinvent how he played. *Subdivisions* became one of their greatest songs, while *The Analog Kid* and *Losing It* had a grand sadness about them, a sure sign that Rush had grown up and were restlessly looking forwards. **JH**

What they said at the time: ***"Makes a strong argument for the view that advanced technology is not necessarily the same thing as progress."***
Rolling Stone

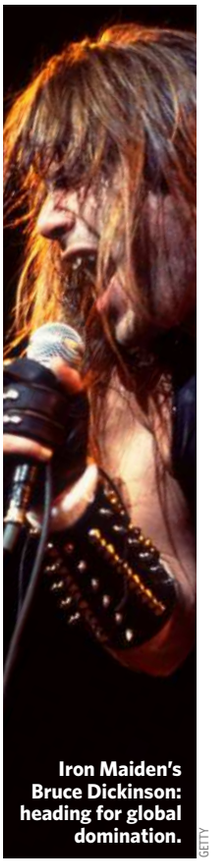
24 PIECE OF MIND

IRON MAIDEN

EMI, 1983

A transitional point between the earthy heavy metal of their early days and the progressive excesses of the late 80s, *Piece Of Mind* is Iron Maiden's most under-appreciated album – and their most frustrating. At least half the songs on it rank among their finest: the *Boy's Own* anthems *Where Eagles Dare* and *The Trooper*; the quasi-Biblical *Revelations*; the perplexingly overlooked *Still Life*. These, as much as anything from *The Number Of The Beast*, defined Maiden as a world-class proposition. At the other end of the scale are the misfiring *Dune* knock-off *To Tame A Land* and the abject *Quest For Fire*. Luckily those two stinkers are right at the end of the album. For the rest of the time, *Piece Of Mind* remains a crucial stepping stone on their journey to global domination. **DE**

What they said at the time: ***"This is the band's best produced and most technically proficient offering to date."*** *Sounds*



Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson: heading for global domination.

GETTY

TUNNEL OF LOVE

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

Columbia, 1987

23

For Bruce Springsteen, the late-80s was a time of partings – from his first wife Julianne Phillips and from the E Street Band – and *Tunnel Of Love* adroitly turned the focus from the political to the personal. His conclusions weren't exactly the stuff of Clintons Cards – with the stunning but cynical Brilliant Disguise questioning how well we ever know a partner, while the spare folk of *Two Faces* admitted to a darker side. The downbeat mood meant the album sold a fraction of predecessor *Born In The USA*, but the songs on *Tunnel Of Love* still ring powerful and true. **HY**

What they said at the time: ***"One of Bruce Springsteen's finest albums and easily his best this decade."*** NME

OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET

KING'S X

Megaforce, 1988

22

There are parts of *Out Of The Silent Planet* that remain deeply mysterious in the way that real art can be – within it there is a strange and often ethereal beauty, trapped between the three-part harmonies and Ty Tabor's spacey, sonic guitar playing. It was voted Album Of The Year by *Kerrang!*, and was hugely influential without ever being copied. In songs like *King*, *Shot Of Love*, *Power Of Love* and *Goldilox* are ideas and sounds that spread outwards like ripples towards everyone from Alice In Chains to Dream Theater and beyond. **JH**

What they said at the time: ***"What you're hearing could be as special as the first time you heard Metallica, or U2, or any original and new-thinking band."*** *Kerrang!*

SKID ROW

SKID ROW

Atlantic, 1989

21

From 1987-89, it seemed like every time you switched on MTV or flicked through a glossy rock publication there were multiple new hair-metal bands begging for your attention.

And while with their self-titled debut album Skid Row were first looked upon as a hair-metal band, they would wisely harden up their image and sound on later releases. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. *Skid Row* had everything a rocker sporting spandex trousers and mile-high hair required, including fist-in-the-air anthems (*Youth Gone Wild*), ballads (*I Remember You*) and tough-guy rock (*Piece Of Me*). And with plum opening spots on some of the era's biggest arena tours (Bon Jovi, Aerosmith), Skid Row couldn't miss with their debut album. **GP**

What they said at the time: ***"Nasty three-chord rock'n'roll with streetwise lyrics… Sound familiar? Well, so do the 11 generic songs on this highly unoriginal LP."*** *Los Angeles Times*

SKYSCRAPER

DAVID LEE ROTH

Warner Bros 1988

20

Where Diamond Dave's first post-Van Halen solo album *Eat 'Em & Smile* was raw, visceral and a critical success, *Skyscraper* divided the faithful for the same reason Van Halen had bugged some of their fans with the *1984* album: for being keyboard heavy, slick and far too polished. Roth's earlier album gets the plaudits all these years later, but *Skyscraper* is bloody good. features some outstanding playing from Steve Vai. From the delay-fuelled intro of *Just Like Paradise* to the seasick delivery of the solo on Stand Up, the kid who made his bones with Frank Zappa, post-Malmsteen Alcatrazz and the very special *Album* with PiL played his nuts off. It's like he's trying to outplay his achievements on *Eat 'Em & Smile*. **EM**

What they said at the time: ***"Doggone if David Lee Roth's second solo album isn't the most flat-out rambunctiously enjoyable hard rock album since, well, David Lee Roth's first solo album."*** *Los Angeles Times*

OH MERCY

BOB DYLAN

Columbia, 1989

19

The 80s weren't kind to Bob Dylan, and by the decade's end this one-time sacred cow was widely perceived as being a spent force. *Oh Mercy* dashed that notion, the 48-year-old rising to Daniel Lanois's production with songs of wisdom and regret. *Most Of The Time* and *Shooting Star* were Dylan's finest croaks de coeur in years, and if he'd found space for fan-favourite out-takes like *Dignity* and *Series Of Dreams*, *Oh Mercy* might even have nudged his 60s work. Critical acclaim rained down, but it was never matched by the sales. **HY**

What they said at the time: **"Oh Mercy *reminds you of what used to excite people about Dylan. Who would have guessed it?"*** *Q*

TATTOO YOU

THE ROLLING STONES

Rolling Stones Records, 1981

18

Tattoo You, ostensibly a collection of cleverly reupholstered out-takes, is the Stones' greatest album of the 1980s. Besides the evergreen *Start Me Up* and *Waiting On A Friend*, it's packed with forgotten gems: from the granite-tough funk rocker *Slave* to Mick Jagger's dancefloor curio *Heaven*, to *Little T&A*, Keith Richards's knuckle-sucking tribute to his latest 'broad': *'She's my little rock'n'roll/My tits and ass with soul, baby…'* Who said romance was dead? **MB**

What they said at the time: ***"There's no denying it, unfortunately. This is a damn good record."*** *The Village Voice!*

CLUTCHING AT STRAWS

MARILLION

EMI, 1987

17

The success of Marillion's third album, *Misplaced Childhood*, had turned an unfashionable prog band into the unlikeliest pop stars of the decade. On *Clutching At Straws* Marillion ditched any remaining musical excesses for a set of songs that were as concise as they were dark. This was largely frontman Fish's album, a slice of tortured introspection that mixed the personal (loneliness, failed romance, alcohol and drug abuse) with the global (most noticeably on the bleak *White Russians*). The heavy emotions carried into the real world – a schism had opened up between Fish and the rest of the band, and the album was his swansong with Marillion. But it was a hell of a way to go out. **DE**

What they said at the time: **"Clutching At Straws *suggests that Marillion may be finally coming in from the cold."*** *Q*

IMAGINOS

BLUE OYSTER CULT

Columbia, 1988

16

With an enormously long gestation period, *Imaginos* was released in July 1988 and promptly bombed. So much so that it would be another 10 years before Blue Öyster Cult made their next record. Yet in spite of the concept being rendered now entirely nonsensical, in all other respects, *Imaginos* was as powerful and cohesive as the band's best works from the 70s. Whereas BÖC had strived on their two immediate predecessors for a more AOR-oriented direction and sounded neutered, this was a hulking, riff-heavy beast, casting them once more as an American Black Sabbath. **PR**

TEXAS FLOOD

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN AND DOUBLE TROUBLE

Epic, 1983

15

The blues scene was practically a retirement home before Stevie Ray Vaughan arrived in 1983 with *Texas Flood*. In three days, the Texan essentially tracked his club set that had knocked 'em dead down in Austin. The 80s had its first blues superstar. **HY**

What they said at the time: *"Stinging leads on Pride And Joy and a roiling combination of Berry, boogie and ensemble horn lines on Love Struck Baby."* *Rolling Stone*

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK WE SALUTE YOU

AC/DC

Atlantic, 1981

14

Released just 16 months after *Back In Black*, although it was a US No.1 AC/DC's eighth studio album was bound be overshadowed by its predecessor. But it's a more than worthy follow-up to that classic. 'Mutt' Lange once again sprinkled stardust on the AC/DC's primal bump and grind and the title track's thunderous opening fusillade remains enduringly spectacular. **PR**

What they said at the time: ***'Beneath the enormous guitar riffs and gut-wrangling rhythms, AC/DC is an unusually expert song-writing band.'*** *Rolling Stone*

PRETTY HATE MACHINE

NINE INCH NAILS

TVT, 1989

13

Electro-dance meets heavy metal? That was an absolute, utter no-no until bands such as Ministry and Nine Inch Nails – and specifically both of their 1989 albums, Ministry's *The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste* and NIN's *Pretty Hate Machine* – came along. NIN's debut wouldn't be the hardest rocking of their career, but tracks such as *Head Like A Hole* courageously – and successfully – bridged the aforementioned stylistic gap. And despite the album being two years old by 1991, it was a show-stealing spot on the inaugural Lollapalooza tour that summer which introduced NIN to the masses and catapulted it up the charts. **GP**

What they said at the time: ***"The playing and production introduce some variety, but soap-on-a-rope singing tends to cancel them out."*** *Chicago Tribune.*

Jane's Addiction: "led rock out of the hair metal wilderness of the 80s."

ALL GETTY

NOTHING'S SHOCKING

JANE'S ADDICTION

Warner, 1988

10

"Nirvana often get credit for being the first alternative band to break through, the band that changed music and led rock out of the hair metal wilderness of the 80s," noted Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello in 2011. "That's just not true. It was Jane's Addiction: inspiring, intelligent, furiously rocking and artistically deep."

There's no denying the critical acclaim that greeted LA alt.rockers Jane's Addiction's major-label debut, nor the roll-call of notable bands mobilised by the album's fiery, feral, genre- (and gender)-bending moments like *Mountain Song* and *Pigs In Zen*. In a world of plump poodle-rock, *Had A Dad* and *Standing In The Shower…Thinking* were hard, lean guttersnipe anthems, thrillingly prescient of the 90s scene to come. **HY**

What they said at the time: ***"When they camp it up or slide like nylon over leather, when Farrell hits on a left-handed ruby-in-fist degenerate poetry, they can be wickedly sweet."***
Melody Maker

WAR

U2

Island, 1983

9

With *War*, their third album, U2 set out to shed what Bono perceived as the Dublin band's "cosy image" – and it didn't mess about. The cherubic cover star of 1980's *Boy* now had a split lip and thousand-yard stare, leading the listener into a world whose tone was set by the jackboot drum beat of *Sunday Bloody Sunday*. If, as Bono said, "war seemed to be the motif for 1982", this was a perfectly apt soundtrack.

Written as U2 watched turmoil unfold in the Falklands and the Middle East, tracks like *Seconds* and the wiry *Like A Song…* were markedly harsher than the stadium-ready sweep of their later work. Yet it was Bono's lyrics that hit hardest. Political but not yet preachy, he has never written more powerfully than on *Sunday Bloody Sunday*'s account of the 1972 massacre (*'Broken bottles under children's feet, bodies strewn across the dead-end street'*).

War knocked *Thriller* off the UK No.1 spot and broke U2 in the States – yet it was mostly savaged by critics and put in the shade by the band's 1987 album *The Joshua Tree*. A shame, as the album's themes remain grimly relevant today. As *Sunday Bloody Sunday* demanded: how long must we sing these songs? **HY**

What they said at the time:
"In spite of itself, War is another example of rock music's impotence and decay."
NME

PETER GABRIEL

PETER GABRIEL

Virgin, 1980

12

Gabriel's dissolving face on the cover of his third album (aka Melt) might be a metaphor for him shedding the image of Genesis's flowery ex-frontman and assuming a new, artier persona for the 1980s. The brilliant pop inside was also arty and new, pairing Gabriel's human touch with mechanised bleeps and heavy-duty percussion. But as the nursery-rhyme lyrics and whistling on the big hit *Games Without Frontiers* demonstrated, his sense of humour and the absurd remained intact. **MB**

What they said at the time: ***"Gabriel's third solo album sticks in the mind like the haunted heroes of the best film noirs."*** *Rolling Stone.*

COMBAT ROCK

THE CLASH

CBS, 1982

11

After *Sandinista!*, the relatively compact *Combat Rock* almost sounded like mid-career consolidation. But anyone expecting the Clash to completely abandon the dressing-up box underestimated their breadth of vision. 1982's Clash assimilated new sounds as casually as they threw on new styles. Post-*Apocalypse Now!* darkness shrouded lyrics, beat poetry rubbed shoulders with keffiyeh-ed Casbah chic, broader horizons lent a cinematic aspect to each musical vignette. It earned double-platinum Stateside, but it ultimately killed The Clash. **IF**

What they said at the time: ***"Proves they can easily make a sprawl of a single album as a triple."*** *Record Mirror.*

NOW AND ZEN

ROBERT PLANT

Es Paranza, 1988

8

Robert Plant spent the first half of the 80s running away from Robert Plant; as in the preening, tight-trousered Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin days. His fourth solo album, *Now And Zen*, finally embraced the man he used to be. It was an album in thrall to modern technology and pop's imaginary computerised future but unafraid to acknowledge the past.

For the first time in seven years, Plant re-located his inner golden god, even singing *'since I've been loving you'* on the album fade-out and getting Jimmy Page to play on *Heaven Knows* and *Tall Cool One* (which included some cheeky Beastie Boys-style sampling of old Zep riffs). Better still, *The Way I Feel* and *Ship Of Fools* proved that Plant could do those melodramatic semi-ballads better than the younger hard rock acts dominating MTV at the time. True, *Now And Zen*'s programmed drums and chirruping synths scream '1988' as loudly as a pair of stone-washed jeans. But Plant never sounded so alive and yet so like the old Robert Plant ever again. **MB**

What they said at the time: ***"Rich in conceptual invention… Plant is better, in some ways, than ever."*** *Rolling Stone*

RIDE THE LIGHTNING

METALLICA

Music For Nations, 1984

7

Monochrome to full-colour, boys to young men, amateurs to professionals. However it is expressed, *Ride The Lightning*, their second album, was Metallica's transformative record, one that opened ears and eyes to what they, and their genre, could become.

It owes much to the interests and obsessions of their bass player Cliff Burton, for whom it would prove, sadly, part of an abbreviated legacy. His love of everything from the cultish, squishy horrors of HP Lovecraft to the quirks and power that changing time signatures, guitar harmonics and musical dynamics brought to Metallica's irresistible way with a riff ring through the record. His was the high, distorted bass melody that intros *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, and the extended solo in the closing instrumental *The Call Of Ktulu*.

Metallica: ensured metal a bright future.

Ambition and a natural belligerence were essential bedfellows, that belligerence not just useful for lacerating thrashers like *Creeping Death* and *Fight Fire With Fire*, but also to deliver a defiant middle finger to those who questioned *Fade To Black*, the forefather of Metallica's power ballads.

Ride The Lightning was the band's great leap forwards, and a record that ensured heavy metal a new future. **JH**

What they said at the time: ***"One of the greatest, most original heavy metal albums of all time."*** *Kerrang!*

LIVE… IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

WHITESNAKE

EMI, 1980

6

It was with their *1987* album that Whitesnake became one of the biggest rock bands in the world, with leonine singer David Coverdale backed by similarly big-haired dudes, and MTV-assisted hits in *Here I Go Again* and *Is This Love*. Back in 1980, it was a different story: essentially a different band.

When Coverdale formed Whitesnake in 1978, having made his name as frontman for Deep Purple, his focus was on soulful, blues-based hard rock. And it never sounded better than on *Live… In The Heart Of The City*, a double album recorded at London's Hammersmith Odeon in 1978 and 1980. The earlier performance was with original drummer Dave Dowle; the latter the classic Whitesnake line-up of Coverdale, guitarists Bernie Marsden and Micky Moody, bassist Neil Murray, and two of Coverdale's old Purple bandmates, drummer Ian Paice and keyboard player Jon Lord. The band's swagger was captured in 'Snake classics *Fool For Your Loving* and *Love Hunter*. And in a beautiful version of the soul standard *Ain't No Love In The Heart Of The City*, the rapport between Coverdale and his audience – "the Whitesnake choir" – was magical. **PE**

David Coverdale: soulful, blues-based hard rock that stuck it to the cynics.

What they said at the time: ***"Coverdale and the boys stick it to the cynics."*** *New Music News*

DONE WITH MIRRORS

AEROSMITH

Geffen, 1985

5

When released, critics attached *Done With Mirrors* like like a pack of wild dogs. It entered the Billboard chart at a lowly 36 and sank fast. Distance, though, has been good to Aerosmith's bastard child. Three decades later, it can now be seen for what it is: arguably the band's most pivotal album, a staging post between their 70s glory days and the cleaned-up incarnation to multi-platinum success from the late 80s and through the 90s. Backed against the wall by their own dalliances and demons, Aerosmith came out spitting and fighting, wild-eyed and desperate. This was the same raw, unrefined version of the band that had made the seminal *Rocks* album in 1976, and also 1979's volatile, unhinged *Night In The Ruts*. That latter record was a close cousin to *Mirrors* – on each there's the tangible sense that the band are walking a tightrope, grasping for a euphoric release, and at the same time just one misstep from plunging into an unfathomable abyss. It's the album that found Aerosmith down in the gutter, muddied, bloodied, with dirt under their fingernails but looking up at the stars. **PR**

What they said at the time: ***"This is easily the best thing the Aeros have recorded since the masterful Rocks back in 1976."*** *Kerrang!*

Monster high: Bowie returns, big style.

4 SCARY MONSTERS (AND SUPER CREEPS)

DAVID BOWIE

RCA, 1980

The music world had never been readier for a David Bowie album than it was in 1980. Most of 76's original punks had been disaffected Bowie fans, and since the scene's stagnation, many had found their way to Rusty Egan's Bowie nights at Billy's in Soho. Mixing Bowie's back catalogue with complementary contemporary electronic music (after *Low*), disco (ditto *Young Americans*) and Ziggy's glam contemporaries, these Bowie nights (characterised by ever more ornate attire and savagely enforced exclusivity) swiftly developed into a Futurist scene that by 1980 had spread from Billy's through Covent Garden's Blitz club to Manchester's Pips and Birmingham's Rum Runner, eventually spawning the New Romantics and the next wave of 80s pop.

To say *Scary Monsters* was eagerly anticipated is to grossly understate matters. Teaser single *Ashes To Ashes* shot to No.4, then making No.1. Its none-more-futurist David Mallet-directed promo video, a zeitgeist-capturing classic, featured Bowie in full Pierrot garb with Blitz host Steve Strange at his side.

"*Scary Monsters* for me has always been some kind of purge." Bowie latterly reflected, "It was me eradicating the feelings within myself that I was uncomfortable with."

Ashes To Ashes found a strung-out Major Tom – reflecting Bowie's earlier drug dependency – hitting '*an all-time low*': "I have a lot of reservations about what I've done," Bowie told *NME*, "I don't feel much of it has any import at all." Then there was *Fashion*, outwardly integral to Bowie as an ever-evolving contemporary icon, but dismissed here as slavish adherence to the fascistic demands of the trend-setting '*goon squad*'.

Scary Monsters' title track (subtext: claustrophobia, alienation, desperation), reflected its time perfectly; the following year saw riots erupt from the UK's simmering malaise of nuclear paranoia and inner-city hopelessness. Yet just as New Romantic escapism counterbalanced austere strike-blighted grim reality, so Bowie's self-immolating lyrics were offset by an irresistibly uplifting soundtrack.

An inspired Tony Visconti production, utilising state-of-the-art methods, created a unique auditory environment. Meticulous drums triggered nagging programmed bass lines, treated vocals lurched from haranguing, edge-of-breakdown, primal screaming to nursery-rhyme creepiness. Robert Fripp's exceptional guitar playing – impassioned, utterly unmistakeable – was key (but not integral; Carlos Alomar's broad strokes proliferated, while Pete Townshend was brought to bear on *Because You're Young* and Chuck Hammer on *Ashes To Ashes*).

Yet while *Scary Monsters*' every last nuance was fiercely progressive, you could still dance to it. Which, in 1980's club culture, was an essential prerequisite, even of a musical visionary afforded God-like status, while absent in self-imposed Berlin exile, by an exceptionally visible futurist faithful.

Capturing its moment perfectly, *Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)* saw David Bowie return in triumph. **IF**

What they said at the time: ***"An eerily impressive stride into the 80s."*** *Melody Maker*

HIGH 'N' DRY

DEF LEPPARD

Vertigo, 1981

3

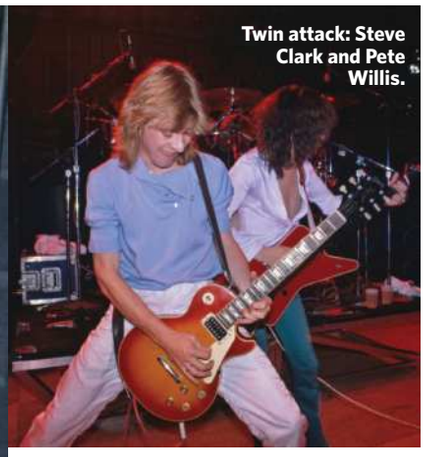
In the 80s, no band was bigger than Def Leppard. With two brilliant albums, *Pyromania* in 1983 and *Hysteria* in 1987, the Sheffield band created state-of-the-art arena rock in which their stated blueprint – the crunch of AC/DC plus the sophistication of Queen – was perfected in partnership with genius producer 'Mutt' Lange. Those albums sold more than 10 million apiece in America, back to back. But in terms of pure hard-rock power, white-hot intensity and balls-out bludgeon riffola, no Leppard record kicks more ass than *High 'N' Dry*.

Their second album, and first with Lange, it was a huge leap forward from the debut *On Through The Night*, released during the height of the NWOBHM and had a rawness to match. *High 'N' Dry* had better songs, more energy and vibe and more class. Side one, as it was in those days, was flawless: the in-your-face aggression of *Let It Go* and *Another Hit And Run*, the boozing-anthem title track, and power ballad *Bringin' On The Heartbreak* leading into the smoking, guitar-heavy instrumental *Switch 625*. Side two had some great stuff too: a real zinger in *Mirror, Mirror (Look Into My Eyes)*. *High 'N' Dry* was Leppard's first great album. Like AC/DC's *Powerage*, it's their cult classic. **PE**

What they said at the time: ***"A five-star studded, senses-shattering sensation."*** *Sounds*

DEF LEPPARD: ROSS HALFIN; 2: DAVID BOWIE: GETTY

Sheffield steel: Leppard with the amazing Rick Allen, centre.



Twin attack: Steve Clark and Pete Willis.

Def Leppard singer **Joe Elliott** on *High 'N' Dry*.

What does the album represent for Leppard?
Joe Elliott: It's our rock album. It's *the* rock album, for sure.

The title track is very AC/DC.
The whole album is! We were AC/DC fans. We were working with AC/DC's producer, in the same studio where *Highway To Hell* was recorded. The difference is we did harmonies and they didn't.

How important was Mutt Lange's role as producer?
Mutt was our teacher. We wanted him on the first record but he wasn't available. And then with *High 'N' Dry* we had to wait for him to finish the Foreigner album 4. Although we'd had a Top 20 album and toured the States, we had no money. So while we waited for Mutt, I was working for my girlfriend's dad as a hod carrier on a building site through the winter. I was so pissed off I broke a Foreigner album in half. *Double Vision*, it was.

But in the end Mutt was worth waiting for.
We had the best producer there's ever been this side of George Martin. Certainly he was the right guy for us. I remember when he heard us play a song called *When The Rain Falls* and said: 'It's all right, but slow it down, it's too fast. And those lyrics suck.' I thought, okay, so that's what a producer does. That song became *Let It Go*. And Mutt was great for me. He taught me how to really project myself as a singer. He turned me into the shouty Joe Elliott.

And Rick Allen's drumming was phenomenal for a kid of seventeen.
Rick was amazing on that record. In fairness, we were always trying to talk him down from over-playing. It just gets in the way of the vocal. So when we were making that album he threw a lot of sticks through the walls. But he was so good – and because back then he had two arms – he could do all the stuff that Brian Downey or Ian Paice did. He learnt from the masters.

Which, for you, are the best songs on the album?
Let It Go is a great song. It's still in our live set now. *Mirror, Mirror* is very cool – with Clarky [guitarist Steve Clark] doing his utmost Jimmy Page kind of riff. And another one that was all Steve was *Switch 625* – although he did base the chord structure on *Tom Sawyer* by Rush.

That segue, Bringin' On The Heartbreak *into* Switch 625, *was a touch of genius.*
We thought about making it one song with this long instrumental thing at the end, like *Free Bird* or the piano coda in *Layla*. A little known fact: Mutt asked me to write lyrics for *Switch*. I said: 'It's an instrumental!' I thought that was obvious.

Is High 'N' Dry *the connoisseurs' Def Leppard album?*
To use a rough comparison, it's our *Led Zeppelin II*. That was their big rock record. They would never make another record that intense again. And we would never make another album as intense as *High 'N' Dry*.

And after that?
We didn't want to do *High 'N' Dry II*. We wanted to take it to the next level. And that was *Pyromania*. **PE**

> *"It's our Led Zeppelin II. We would never make another album as intense again."* Joe Elliott

VAN HALEN: GETTY x2

In the spotlight: Eddie Van Halen.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST

VAN HALEN
Warner Bros, 1980

As the 80s dawned, Van Halen persevered in trying to top the greatest hard rock debut album of all time. Whereas *Van Halen II* had aped some of their debut's glittering, histrionic pop smarts, album number three was an altogether heavier proposition and all the better for it. Dave Lee Roth was at his most voluble, the crunchy cover tunes were a thing of the past, and not one of the album's 33 minutes is wasted. The cover photo – a collapsing Eddie Van Halen held up by his bandmates – was an exercise in throwaway cool. If you were lucky enough you might even have got a copy that had a poster of the shy and retiring Diamond Dave topless and chained to a fence, taken by renowned photographer Helmut Newton.

The band clearly weren't afraid to push musical boundaries either. The songs grooved and roiled, Eddie was already starting to experiment musically, throwing a distorted Wurlitzer into the mix, while they married acoustic guitar with Eddie's rangy, open and roaring electrical riffs on songs like *Take Your Whiskey Home*, opted for some lop-sided skiffle with the languid *Could This Be Magic?*, but were still capable of the full-throated bellow that was the Van Halen stamp, as on the album's caustic openers *And The Cradle Will Rock…* and *Everybody Wants Some!!*. The former was playful and loose – who else would pause a song so that their singer could lean in to ask: 'Have you seen Junior's grades?'? – while the latter became a live staple of Van Halen's live shows, if only for Dave's eulogy to stockings, on which the song hinged. Perhaps best of all, though, is *In A Simple Rhyme*, which swaggers like The Who's *Won't Get Fooled Again* would have if it had been conceived beneath the Californian sunshine. **PW**

What they said at the time: *"Specialising in decibels and cock-strutting bravado, they put forth the proposition that Might Is Always Right, and the proof on their third LP is pretty convincing."* *Rolling Stone*

THE REAL 100 GREATEST ALBUMS OF THE 80s

"They knew the world was waiting... and it really was special"

At the start of the 80s, **Black Sabbath** needed a fresh start after crazy train Ozzy went just too far off the rails. Enter the greatest heavy metal singer of all time: Ronnie James Dio.

Words: **Paul Elliott**

1 HEAVEN AND HELL

BLACK SABBATH

Vertigo, 1980

In 1970, Black Sabbath defined a new genre in rock music with not one but two of the greatest heavy metal albums of all time – the debut, *Black Sabbath*, and *Paranoid*. What they created ten years later, with *Heaven And Hell*, was a masterpiece that brought the band back from the dead. "That album," said guitarist Tony Iommi, "gave us a new lease of life."

And in this, the resurrection of Black Sabbath, the key figure was the guy who had the balls of steel to take the place of Ozzy Osbourne as the band's new singer. That guy was Ronnie James Dio. And as he once said of *Heaven And Hell*: "It was not Black Sabbath with Ozzy. It was something different. And we were great together."

The band had been in a steep decline before the decision was made to fire Ozzy in 1979. On their last two albums of the 70s – *Technical Ecstasy* and *Never Say Die!* – they sounded frazzled and unfocused, and on a 1978 tour they'd had their arses kicked by the support act, a young and hungry Van Halen. Dumping their singer was a major gamble. For all the wild, booze-fuelled antics that had led to his dismissal, Ozzy was a hugely charismatic frontman whose bruised voice was as integral to Sabbath's sound as Iommi's leaden riffs. But what they found in Dio – himself recently fired from Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow – was a singer as unique in his own way as Ozzy was.

As illustrated in the three classic albums he made with Rainbow, Dio had a voice of immense range, power and melodic finesse. He was also a lyricist of such distinction that he took over that role from Sabbath's bassist Geezer Butler. "I knew what Ronnie could do," Iommi said. "I'd heard the Rainbow stuff."

What Dio brought to Sabbath was a sense of grandeur and epic scale, and it was evident in the very first song they wrote together, *Children Of The Sea*. Based on what Butler called "this old blues song", it was developed into a heavyweight piece, as beautiful as it was powerful: the touchstone for the entire album.

Most epic of all was the title track, in which Dio weighed the opposing forces of good and evil, and Iommi laid down the greatest solo of his life. *Die Young* was both brutal and eerily atmospheric; *Lonely Is The Word* a titanic heavy blues. And the last song written for the album became its thundering opening statement, *Neon Knights*.

Released in April 1980, five months before Ozzy made his comeback with his *Blizzard Of Ozz* album, *Heaven And Hell* was Black Sabbath reinvented and resurrected. Dio would go on to make two more Sabbath albums – *Mob Rules* in 1981, and *Dehumanizer* in 1992. There was also the reunion album on which the band were billed as Heaven & Hell, Dio's final act before his death on May 16, 2010. But it was with this, his first Sabbath album, that Ronnie James Dio reached his peak: the greatest heavy metal singer of them all, in the greatest heavy metal band of them all.

What they said at the time: ***"Ronnie James Dio has injected a whole new energy into the group. Just sit back, turn it up, and feel your brain implode."*** *Sounds*

Judas Priest frontman **Rob Halford** on the underrated Dio-voiced classic.

"*Heaven And Hell* is a classic. It's one of the great heavy metal albums, period. And it's an album that has really stood the test of time. It sounds as fresh and powerful now as when it came out in 1980.

It brought a different dimension to Black Sabbath, with Ronnie's voice and lyrics and the way Tony [Iommi] wrote for him. When you're writing as a team, which is what Ronnie and Tony were doing, you put a different metal head on, and that album has an overall texture and atmosphere that pulls it away from the Ozzy-era Sabbath. In that sense, listening to Sabbath with Ozzy and Sabbath with Ronnie are two different experiences.

Heaven And Hell had a different dimension, but it stayed within the framework of what Black Sabbath was all about. It was still Tony on guitar, Geezer [Butler] on bass, Bill [Ward] on drums, but overall the two worlds are separate. It's not just Ronnie's voice, but the whole sound of the band is more melodic.

The writing and production and the overall presentation still had its roots in the British heavy metal vibe. And Ronnie was obviously greatly attached to British heavy metal from his days with Rainbow. But as an American, he brought a different inflection to Sabbath. He gave the band his stamp. And as much as I'm a huge fan of the stuff that Ronnie did with the band Dio, I think he really went the extra mile in his vocal performances on *Heaven And Hell*.

"I'm sure Ronnie had as much determination as Tony, Geezer and Bill had to make the album special. They knew the world was waiting for that record. And it really *was* special. *Neon Knights* was perfect to kick the whole thing off, so fast and heavy, and then you had *Children Of The Sea* and *Heaven And Hell* itself. A

ou put on that first Sabbath album, an album they made in a day or two, and it's mind-blowing. But the way the band grew and developed with *Heaven And Hell* made it ultra-special. What that album offers within the sphere of Black Sabbath is, I think, unique. It's an absolute classic – for Sabbath and for metal music."

Ronnie Dio fronting Black Sabbath in 1980.

GETTY

DAMAGE INC

By 1986, thrash metal had outgrown its violent playground in the dives of San Francisco, and **Metallica**, **Megadeth**, **Slayer** and **Anthrax** were about to release albums that would change the face of music. This is the story of the year that thrash broke, by the people who were there.

Words: **Jon Hotten**

It was 1985, almost 1986. The biggest record in the world was Bruce Spingsteen's chest-beating *Born In The USA*. The upper reaches of the American charts were populated by bands who had appeared at Live Aid that summer. MTV was four years old, and still 15 months away from the launch of its first specialist show, Headbanger's Ball… The rock bands that could get airplay included Ratt, Ozzy Osbourne, Def Leppard and Judas Priest. The biggest band in Los Angeles was Mötley Crüe, who were at the head of a new glam rock movement that soon had old arena lags like Ozzy and The Scorpions frosting their hair and wearing eyeliner.

But below the radar, something was stirring. The unruly offspring of heavy metal and punk rock, thrash metal had coalesced three years earlier around a handful of disenfranchised musicians in San Francisco's Bay Area, with smaller pockets of activity in New York and Los Angeles. The key bands – San Francisco's Metallica, LA's Slayer and Megadeth and New York's Anthrax – had all released records that had been greeted rapturously by those in the know.

The scene was based around a handful of independent labels: Metal Blade and Megaforce in California, Music For Nations in the UK. For three years, they'd sustained themselves without any overlap with the mainstream music industry.

But all that was starting to change. Metallica – the undisputed heavyweight champions of the scene – had signed with major label Elektra in 1985, and their peers were eyeing their progression with a mixture of admiration and envy. By the end of the year, the floodgates had opened, and thrash had planted its size 11 baseball boots squarely in the mainstream.

Brian Slagel (Metal Blade Records founder): The thrash scene was super-small. Certainly in the US, all the bands knew each other. I think back then, everyone was just so in love with the music. It was an us-against-the-world mentality.

Lars Ulrich (Metallica): You could send five demo tapes to people, and a week later, a hundred kids had copies. It could spread like brush fire.

Brian Slagel: I guess it's easy now to think that the big bands of the time were the Big Four, but I think back then, if you were going to name a band that would come from inside that scene who would evetually make it huge, we all would have said Armoured Saint. But it just ended up not ever happening the way we thought it would.

Lars Ulrich: You could certainly argue that me and James at that time were more kind of the squarer guys, 'cause we were more like, 'MOTÖRHEAD! IRON MAIDEN!' Heavy metal T-shirts, and long hair and banging our heads into the wall.

Harald Oimoen (photographer): Dave Mustaine, of course, was extremely bitter about his dismissal from Metallica and drowned himself in alcohol and drugs. I was more than happy to indulge him. Lars and Mustaine still hung out regularly, unbeknownst to the media, where Dave spoke his mind, slagging Metallica at every possible chance.

Eric Peterson (Testament guitarist): Paul Baloff (late Exodus singer) was the idol of the Bay Area, because of his personality. He had a real wolf. He'd walk into the clubs with his wolf, taking it everywhere. It had paws like a bear. He had a couple of commands that would make it snarl at you.

Gary Holt (Exodus guitarist): The wolf's name was By-Tor. Paul had this Jim Jones quality over a crowd. If he said drink the purple Kool-Aid, they drank it. He had that sort of twisted leadership.

Brian Slagel: Slayer was an interesting group because they weren't particularly good friends. When they would get together it was just magical, but they didn't really hang out a whole lot.

Tom Araya (Slayer vocalist/bassist): The scene was bigger in Europe. We played the Heavy Sounds festival in Belgium [in late '85] to 15,000 people. We'd been playing to 300-400 people in clubs in the US.

Gem Howard (Music For Nations): Metallica broke Europe before they broke America, and when (managers) Q-Prime took over, they took a hit European act and broke them in America.

On 27 December 1985, in a snow-bound Copenhagen, Metallica are putting the final touches to their third album, *Master Of Puppets*. They've been in Denmark for four months, splitting their time between Sweet Silence Studios, where they recorded previous album *Ride The Lightning*, and their shared suites in the Scandinavia Hotel. The master tapes will be shipped to Los Angeles, to be mixed by Michael Wagener, whose credits include Mötley Crüe and Poison. They don't know it, but the next 12 months will change everything for them and for the movement they'd come to spearhead.

James Hetfield (Metallica singer/guitarist): The songs themselves remind me of an innocent Metallica. Not stupid, but in a not tarnished, not ruined-by-fame way. The honesty and innocence of living at the studio; still having that fire. And only Metallica on our minds. I think *Master Of Puppets* was all we ever thought about.

GETTY

The four horsemen: Metallica in 1986.

"There's an innocence about *Master Of Puppets*. A real 'Fuck you, world!' attitude to it."
James Hetfield

"I WAS AN HOUR AWAY FROM DEATH."

How Slayer's Jeff Hanneman survived flesh-eating disease.

Jeff Hanneman was kicking back in the hot tub with a couple of beers when he nearly died. The Slayer guitarist certainly wasn't partying hard, but he was relaxed enough not to notice a spider bite him on the arm.

"Didn't even feel it," he says now. "But an hour later, I knew that I was ill."

By that time, Hanneman was on his way to hospital, a further hour away. In the car, he pulled up his sleeve. "I could see the flesh corrupting," he recalls. "The arm was real hot. I got to the emergency room, and thank god the nurse knew straight away what it was. By chance, although it is pretty rare, she had seen a case a little while before. At that point, I was an hour away from death."

The spider bite was not serious in itself, but it had caused a bacterial infection in the deeper layers of the skin and tissues of the arm. The clinical diagnosis was Necrotizing Fasciitis, which is more widely known as Flesh-Eating Disease.

"Unbelievably, the doctor was a Slayer fan," says Hanneman, "The first thing he said to me was: 'First, I'm going to save your life. Then I'm going to save your arm. Then I'm going to save your career'."

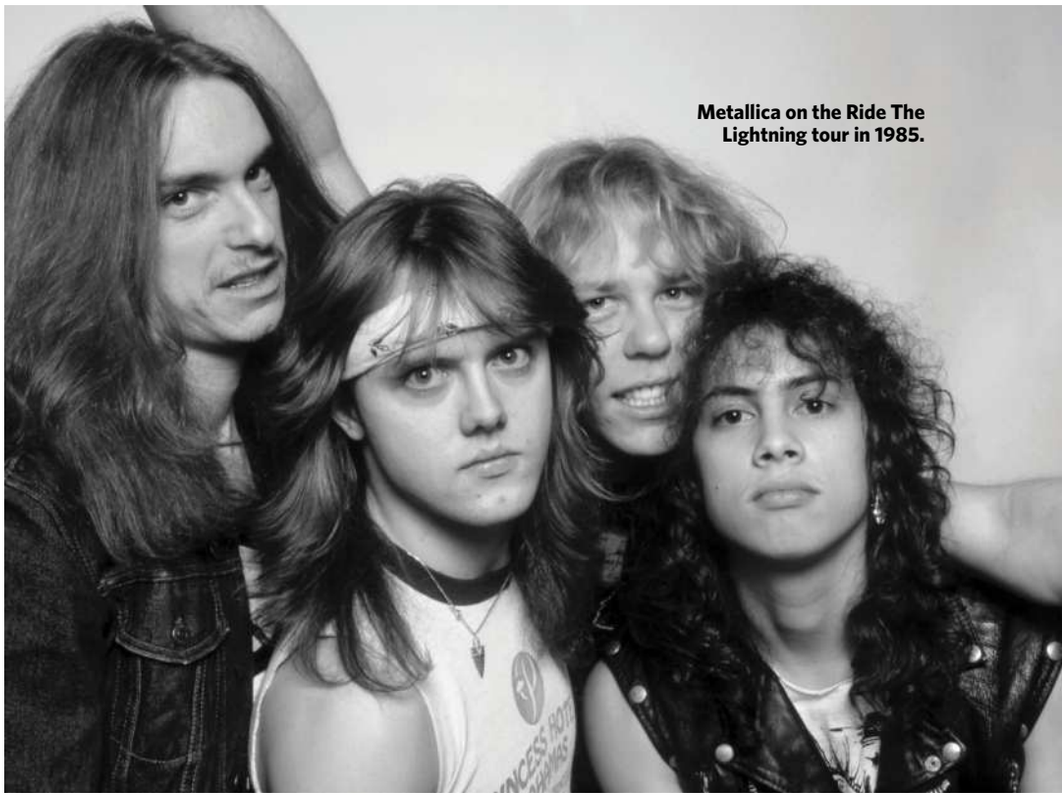
Hanneman underwent emergency surgery to remove the dead and dying tissue. The doctor was able to save the muscles and the tendons, but the guitarist had a large open wound on his arm. He spent the next two months in hospital, having extensive skin grafts and heavy doses of antibiotics to suppress the infection.

"I had to learn to walk again," Hanneman says. "I hadn't stood up for a month, apart from anything else. The skin grafts were very painful, and all of the muscles and tendons in the arm were very weak. That was okay though. I count myself very lucky that the nurse and the doctor knew right away what had happened to me, because things could have been a whole lot worse."

While Slayer, fulfilled their touring commitments with stand-in guitarist Gary Holt, Hanneman has spent most of 2011 rehabilitating. With the worst of it behind him, Hanneman can see the humour in the situation too.

"It's the kind of thing I might have written a song about," he acknowledges. "Everything that could go wrong this year did, but you know, it turned out okay. Satan had my back."

WORDS: JON HOTTEN/IMAGE: GETTY



Metallica on the Ride The Lightning tour in 1985.

GETTY

Kirk Hammett (Metallica guitarist): I could tell it was really blossoming into something to be reckoned with. Every song we came up with was like the greatest thing. Every time we'd write another it was like, 'Oh my god,' you know.

Lars Ulrich: We braced ourselves for fucking uproar in the thrash community about the sell-outs and the acoustic guitars and all that. But we had to go on that path because that was the truth; that was our truth.

Gem Howard: We had all four of what was to become the Big Four at the same time at Music For Nations. We licensed Slayer for the UK. We had the first two Anthrax albums, the first three Metallica, and we had the first Megadeth album. Metallica were the strongest of those without a doubt.

James Hetfield: There's an innocence about it and a real, 'Fuck you, world' attitude to it still. And we weren't very influenced by all of the 'bigness' of Metallica. Plus the songs – they have that energy, that fire; they're still youthful, but we were still growing, and the songs got grander and bigger.

On 31 January, 1986. The Spastik Children – Metallica's Cliff Burton and James Hetfield (on drums) plus vocalist Fred Cotton and guitarist James McDaniel – play a show at San Francisco dive Ruthie's Inn, a hub of the Bay Area scene.

Eric Peterson (Testament guitarist): Ruthie's was in a very dangerous part of San Pablo Avenue, all broken-down looking shops. The dressing room was this little closet behind the stage. Basically you hung out in the crowd, or you got there right when you went on and you walked through the crowd. It was a very dirty, dingy-looking club owned by these blues kind of people, Big Daddy and Earl. They made the best Kamikazes. That was the drink there.

> "No one had guns. It was all switchblades. Everybody had a switchblade."
> Eric Peterson

Charlie Benante (Anthrax drummer): *Master Of Puppets* moved everything up a notch, that's for sure.

Brian Slagel: The record was incredible. Honestly, I'm not a huge fan of *Kill 'Em All*, but *Ride The Lightning* was tremendous and then they made this album that just changed it up again.

Eric Peterson: It had more production, it sounded cleaner. *Sanitarium*, everyone was proud of that. That was killer. It was everybody's song. It was the great hope. It was like, 'Listen to the production on that, you can sound as good as a Rainbow record'. It was *that* classic. It was very inspiring.

Gary Holt: Fuck, first time I heard *Battery*, it was like, 'That's awesome'.

Gary Holt: Paul Baloff and I started crafting Exodus in our own vision – which was basically brutality and violence. The audience responded in kind, and when Ruthie's Inn opened, it got really insane.

Eric Peterson: Baloff would say, "Any poseurs out there, we want to see their blood on the stage." The best way to put it would be some kind of Mayan sacrifice ritual.

Metallica take a break from recording *Master Of Puppets*, Copenhagen, December 1985.

ROSS HALFIN X2

Robb Flynn (Vio-lence guitarist/future Machine Head singer): At one Exodus show at Ruthie's, this dude had a cow leg bone, and he's in the pit running around. This big fuckin' dude, running around clubbing people with this cow bone…

Lars Ulrich: I know our British counterparts drank a lot, but in some ways it felt like we drank more. In America it was all about the fucking vodka bottles, jumping in the vodka bottles, and anything went from there.

Eric Peterson: Metallica would go to our shows a lot. I'd always see James or Kirk. Lars would pop in, wasted out of his mind. I remember James sitting at Ruthie's with his hat on backwards. He was just slamming the table with both fists and shouting 'THE HAUNTING… THE HAUNTING…'.

Gary Holt: The birth of the violent thrasher was Ruthie's Inn, nowhere else. You had people like the late, great Toby Haines head-walking. I've seen that guy make nearly 25 feet using people's heads as stepping-stones. The guy was about 6'5" and he had some weight to him. The Exodus song *Bonded By Blood* was about the shows at Ruthie's when there was broken glass all over the stage and people were all cut up. It was pre-being worried about Hepatitis C and all those things.

Robb Flynn: There's this kind of myth about the thrash thing that it was all friendly violent fun but it wasn't. There was such and element of danger, such an element of violence, it wasn't safe to go.

Eric Peterson: No-one brought guns, it was all switchblades. Everybody had a switchblade.

Ozzy and his support band in 1986: "I thought they were making fun of me."

Bob Nalbandian (*Headbanger* magazine founder): Everyone thinks speed metal, or thrash metal as it was later called, originated in San Francisco, but you gotta remember three out of the Big Four bands started in Los Angeles.

It was to Los Angeles that Dave Mustaine had retreated after being kicked out of Metallica in 1982 for his drinking and drug use. He channelled his fury into Megadeth, the band he founded with bassist Dave Ellefson. The pair are thrash metal's own Toxic Twins – fully-fledged junkies who struggled to juggle their musical careers and their heroin habits (they spent half of their $8000 advance for 1985 debut album, *Killing Is My Business… And Business Is Good*, on drugs, alcohol and food). Despite that, much was expected from the follow-up, *Peace Sells… But Who's Buying?*.

Dave Mustaine (Megadeth singer/guitarist): I felt what we had done with Metallica was so fresh and invigorating. I'd been living on my own since I was 15. Every day was get up and play guitar and sell pot for a living. That was my existence. To be able to have a real job playing music, c'mon… Once that looked like it wasn't going to happen, I went into conservation mode. That's when Megadeth was created, because I had survival skills ever since I was a kid and my parents got divorced. I'd like to think there was a lot of great music ➔

"I CALL MYSELF A CHRISTIAN."

Ex-wild-child Dave Mustaine: he's on a mission from God.

For the first 20 years of his career, Megadeth frontman Dave Mustaine was regarded as one of the most reliably obnoxious figures in the metal world. From the sneer that never left his lips to his reputation for drug and drink-fuelled antagonism and that filter-free verbosity that repeatedly got him into trouble, he was celebrated as one of the most influential thrash metal pioneers and, more frequently, an unapologetic, Olympic-standard asshole. As a result, his conversion to Christianity came as surprise.

"I found a way of life for me," he states. "I believe in God and I call myself a Christian. Most people will say 'Uh-oh, he's going to become one of those people who say one thing and then act a different way', but that's not who I am. I'm so grateful that people haven't totally written me off after the terrible things I've done. I'm so blessed."

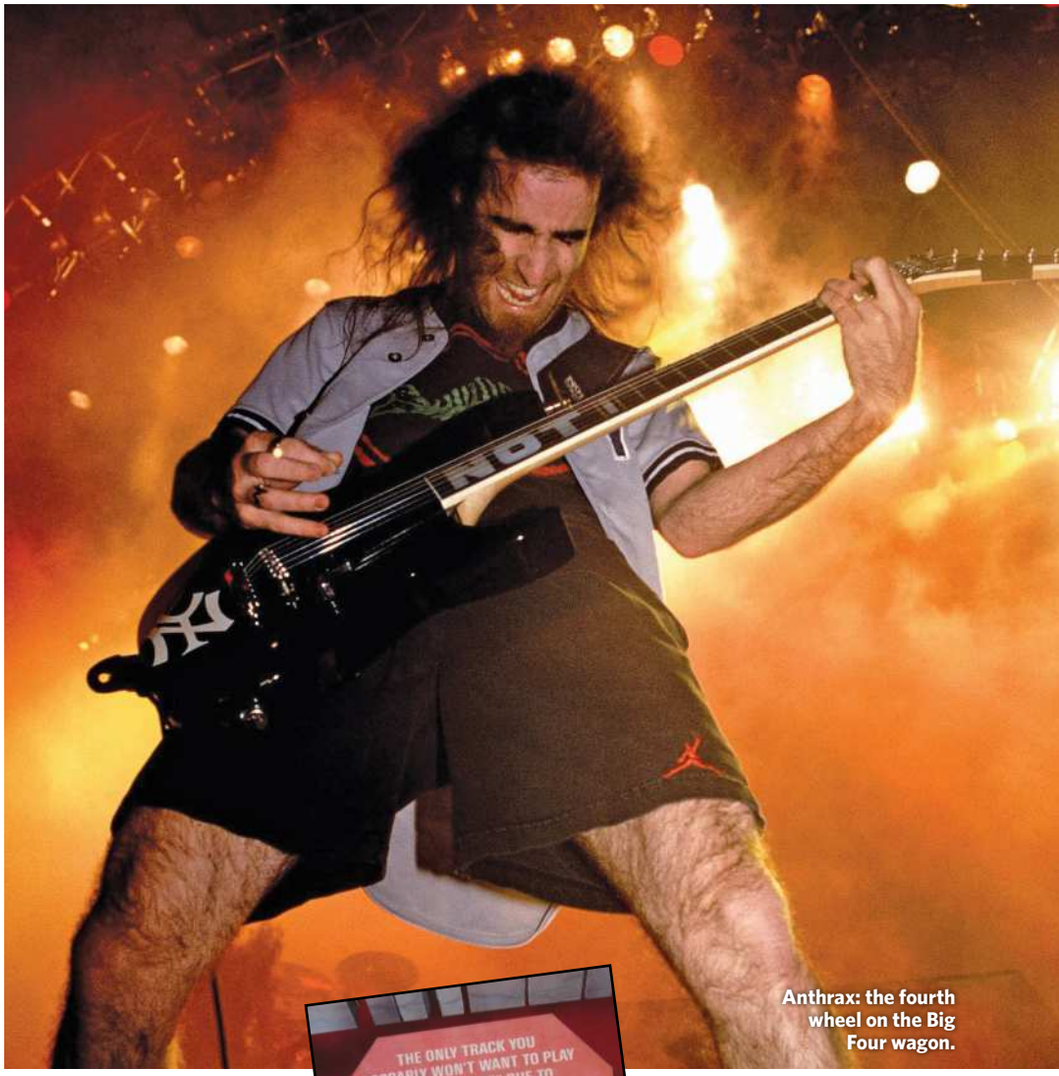
In fact, Dave Mustaine has long been driven by a strong sense of morality, even though his long-term addiction to heroin and tendency to shed band members like so many idly crushed dog-ends might have suggested otherwise. Outspoken and eminently quote-worthy from very early on in his career, there was something deliciously but familiarly contrary about his newfound status as metal's premier servant of the Lord.

A devoted family man who lives with wife Pamela and two children in a lavish faux-French chateau in the San Diego hills, Mustaine has hardly used his success to propagate any religious message and there is little evidence that finding God has had a detrimental effect on his music. But becoming a Christian has led him to the peace of mind that always seemed out of reach in the past.

"The stuff that pissed me off when I was in my 20s doesn't piss me off now I'm 50," he says today. "I donated one of my guitars to be auctioned to buy an oven for this soup kitchen down in South Africa. That's the stuff that makes me feel good. Using the gift that I've been given to help other people."

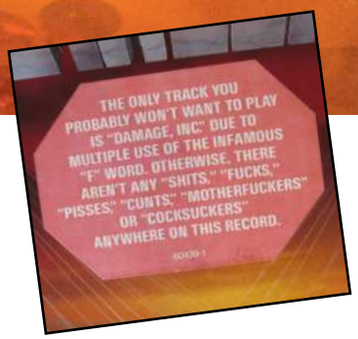
Metal's ultimate asshole reborn as one of the good guys? Mustaine makes no such bold claims, but as he passes his half-century, he's definitely trying...

WORDS: DOM LAWSON



REX FEATURES

Anthrax: the fourth wheel on the Big Four wagon.



that came out of the creation of Megadeth, but I don't really think it was destined to be any different because there was just so much personality between the four of us.

Dave Ellefson (Megadeth bassist): Living in Los Angeles we were fish out of water because we knew our greener pastures were almost anywhere but Los Angeles. There was an underbelly and an underworld. We were basically homeless and going with any girl we could move in with who would take in a struggling musician, living in my van or our rehearsal room in downtown Los Angeles. Our drug habits were certainly a major inconvenience to lifestyle and certainly cash flow. We went down to hell.

Dave Mustaine: The city we lived in, Los Angeles, it was dangerous. We were dangerous. All of that in-fighting with the glam bands versus the metal bands, man it was dangerous, especially with the heroin. You got guys in Mötley Crüe driving around in exotic cars, people dying behind the wheel. It was a dangerous time back then…

Dave Ellefson: Me and Dave were the two who had no back-up plan, no day job, no college degree, we put it all on the line. Which is why we'd be homeless together. And those things are the DNA of a great band. That's what Megadeth had.

Dave Mustaine: There were so many days when the other guys were dope sick, lying on the floor puking and shitting their pants and I was thinking 'Glamorous life!', you know? But the actual making of the record was much more enjoyable for me. We went into The Music Grinder, which was in was a kind of cool, fashionable area and there were a lot of hot chicks around, a good hamburger joint across the street, a cool hot dog place at the end of the road, and we were living hand to mouth at the time. If we had enough money to get our heroin and a good hot dog, it was a good day.

Bob Nalbandian: I interviewed Dave Mustaine soon after he left, or got kicked out of, Metallica. I thought they were really cocky and to a degree pretty arrogant, but in a good way. If you read or listen back to some of those early interviews I did with Mustaine, you can tell that they had this 'I don't give a fuck' attitude and this total determination to succeed and be the best.

Dave Mustaine: I remember I was smitten with Belinda Carlisle from The Go-Go's at the time. She came down to the studio to see me one time, and I'd just snorted some heroin and taken a big hit on a joint and she knocks on the door. She was apparently really anti-drugs, and I was totally wasted. I don't know what would have happened if I'd been sober. Maybe we would've dated and had lots of little Go-Go babies. I don't know, man, but that was one of the lowest points of making that record, having that opportunity dangled in front of my face and losing it.

MEGADETH: GETTY

Megadeth in 1986: Dave Mustaine and Dave Ellefson, right.

Lars Ulrich: Whether you heard that record (*Peace Sells*) for the first time in 1986, or you hear this record for the first time today or tomorrow, *Peace Sells* is a great heavy metal album. Nothing more, nothing less. It has stood the test of time.

Dave Mustaine: Let me tell you, *Peace Sells* wasn't so much a record as it was a way of life. That was it. It was your friends and your enemies.

On March 3, 1986, Metallica's *Master Of Puppets* appears in stores with a fake parental warning sticker: "The only track you probably won't want to play is *Damage, Inc.* due to multiple use of the infamous 'F' word. Otherwise, there aren't any 'shits,' 'fucks,' 'pisses,' 'cunts,' 'motherfuckers,' or 'cocksuckers' anywhere on this record'." Three weeks later, at the Kansas Coliseum, Wichita, Metallica begin a five month stint supporting Ozzy Osbourne on his US tour. It would help propel *Master Of Puppets* to its peak position of No. 29 on the Billboard charts – a feat unthinkable even 12 months before.

Mick Wall (journalist): Mötley Crüe went out with Ozzy, came back stars. Def Leppard went out with Ozzy, came back stars. Metallica went out with Ozzy, came back stars. That's how it worked.

Brian Slagel: The shows with Ozzy were the first time any of these speed metal bands had broken out of the very small scene that they'd come from.

Ozzy Osbourne: I would walk past their bus before shows and hear them playing old Sabbath songs, and I thought they were making fun of me. They wouldn't talk to me and always kept their distance. I thought it was really weird. I asked their tour manager about it and said, 'Is this their idea of a joke?' And he said, 'No, they think you're gods'.

Lars Ulrich: It was the first time we got out to middle America. It was the first time that Metallica showed up on the radar screens.

Gary Holt: Metallica were all friends of mine, so I was super happy for them. Soon as they did *Ride The Lightning* we knew they were onto something. Then it was *Master Of Puppets*, and you know, they were just better than everyone else.

Lars Ulrich: I remember the last date of the Ozzy tour, in Hampton, Virginia. Our manager, Cliff Burnstein, came down from New York for the last show. So we're all sitting there in the back of the bus and he said, "You've now sold enough records to go and buy houses." We'd been on the Ozzy tour, at that point for five months. All of us, band and crew on one bus, drinking 12 hours a day, fucking, just living every crazy fantasy about girls and heavy metal. We were completely ignorant to what was going on, you know, on that side of it. I remember Cliff sitting there and going "*Fuuuuuckkk*, I can buy a house." The rest of didn't want to buy a house – we wanted to stay on tour.

Kirk Hammett: I never expected it to be the success it turned out to be. Compared to what else was in the charts, it was a huge orange in amongst the bunch of apples.

Mick Wall: The big difference between Metallica and the rest was this: they had a great record, but they also had Lars and they had Mensch and Cliff Burnstein at Q-Prime. They knew they weren't going to get on MTV, so they very cleverly said, "We're not doing a video." At the same time, Lars is talking to Michael Alago, head of A&R at Elektra, and to promoters and all of this. They were grassroots and corporate at the same time. Lars was a man you could do business with. That was the difference.

Charlie Benante (Anthrax drummer): At the time, *Headbanger's Ball* was just starting on MTV. It would piss you off that you only got an hour, and even then you'd get maybe one video in amongst Bon Jovi and Poison, but it was happening. Things were changing.

> "If we had enough money to get our heroin and a hot dog, it was a good day."
> Dave Mustaine

Anthrax: persistence of tan.

GETTY

Thanks to *Master Of Puppets*, thrash metal had a foothold in the mainstream. Other bands were lining up behind Metallica. One was Slayer, who were working on their third album, *Reign In Blood*, while Metallica were on the road with Ozzy.

Brian Slagel: There was a competition between the bands over who could be the fastest. Back then, it was called speed metal rather than thrash metal. So Slayer wanted to be the fastest and the heaviest – 'We have to one-up with everybody else's stuff'.

Tom Araya (Slayer bassist/vocalist): We took the black metal thing from Venom, and we took it to a different level. The idea behind *Reign In Blood* was not to do another slow album, like *Hell Awaits*. A really fast album with short songs. That was the thought process.

Kerry King (Slayer guitarist): What do I remember about writing the songs? [Thinks for a long time] No, not a fucking clue, man…

Brian Slagel: Somebody told me that Rick Rubin was interested in the band, and I thought, "Okay, that's interesting, Def Jam, a rap label…" I went and met them, and Rubin was definitely more of a metal guy than I thought he'd be. They really wanted the band. They were the most aggressive of anybody that wanted the band.

Tom Araya: What did Rick Rubin bring to it? His musical ear. He made it tolerable. He gave it the Midas touch. What happened on *Reign In Blood* is that although it's fast, you can hear everything.

Brian Slagel: The demos of *Reign In Blood* were around 34 minutes, but the finished album's about six minutes shorter or something.

Tom Araya: We did the mixes, and I was thinking, "28 minutes..?" I said to Andy (Wallace, engineer), "Is that the total of everything?" He was like, "Er, yeah…" We asked if that was gonna be a problem with Rick. He looked at it and said, 'Well, an album constitutes 10 songs and you got 10 songs…'

Jeff Hanneman: When we got the finished record and saw the cover (artist Larry Carroll's painting of Satan being carried by men with erections), I was like, "Yeah!" I had the original framed in my house for years.

Kerry King: I thought that the cover looked fucking cool and evil. I wasn't bothered about everything else. I really didn't care.

Tom Araya: It was upsetting when (Def Jam's distributor) Columbia refused to release it. It was because of that song, *Angel Of Death* (about Nazi physician Josef Mengele).

Jeff Hanneman: I'd seen a documentary and it looked like a cool subject in that if you want to write about evil, and that's what we wanted to write about, then you won't get too many human beings that are more so.

Kerry King: It's written in the way that a show on a documentary channel is written. It relates what happened. It doesn't try to say it was good or bad.

Lars Ulrich: I think Slayer were the most interesting because they were so extreme. They didn't give a fuck about anything, which was cool.

On September 10, 1986. Metallica begin a headline tour of Europe at Cardiff's St David's Hall, with Anthrax as the support. On September 27, after a gig in Stockholm, they board their tourbus for the overnight journey to Copenhagen. In the early hours of the morning, near Ljunby, the bus hit a patch of black ice and flips off the road. Cliff Burton is thrown from his bunk and through the window. The bus falls on top of him, killing

"There are times when I romanticise those days. Life seemed a lot more simple back then."
James Hetfield

him. Earlier, the bassist had tossed a coin with Hetfield to decide who got the bunk. It is thrash metal's first big reality check.

Charlie Benante: We had travelled on ahead. We said goodbye, got to the venue to find kids saying, "Did you hear what happened to Metallica?" I'd had people die in my family, but this was strange.

James Hetfield: I saw the bus lying right on him. I saw his legs sticking out. I freaked. The bus driver was trying to yank the blanket out from under him to use for other people. I just went, "Don't fucking do that!" I wanted to kill the guy. Our tour manager said, "Let's get the band together and take them back to the hotel." And I'm thinking, "The band? There ain't no band any more. It's just three guys."

Gem Howard: There was a Japanese journalist called Terri Mashizuke. She was like a schoolgirl, a tiny little thing. She came into the office in floods of tears. It takes a lot to make a journalist cry.

Eric Peterson: We'd set up a gig for [Megaforce Records co-owners] Jonny and Marsha Z. Jonny was close to Metallica at that point. We were practicing, and Jonny was just staring at the bass drum. He was lost. He said, 'Cliff died last night', and he started crying. We all shed some tears.

Kirk Hammett: In the last four or five months of his life, Cliff started playing a lot more guitar. He'd single out little licks when he listened to music and would have me figure them out for him. I remember him really loving the way Ed King of Lynyrd Skynyrd played guitar.

FADE TO BLACK

How Metallica gave birth to thrash metal – and then killed it.

Megadeth bassist Dave Ellefson has more perspective than most on the thrash metal scene. "They talk about the Big Four," says Ellefsen. "Quite honestly, there was a Big One, and that was Metallica. They were miles and miles ahead of all of us."

So far ahead, in fact, that Metallica almost immediately outgrew the genre they had single-handedly inspired. By their third album, *Master Of Puppets*, I was warned during a visit to the studio where they were recording it not to even mention the word thrash. Released the same year as Slayer's *Reign In Blood*, Lars was content, he said, "to let Slayer run with the whole thrash thing now. They want it, they can have it."

Which is exactly what happened and over the next five years, as Metallica's ambitions stayed apace with their rocketing success, their peers ceased to be Megadeth and Slayer, but Guns N' Roses and Bon Jovi, then the biggest rock bands in the world.

Thus, in 1991: the Black album, Metallica's sonically-exquisite, fully-textured, ballads-and-all assault on the summit of Everest-like rock popularity. Their attempt to win the hearts and minds of an audience that wouldn't have been seen dead listening to 'thrash' that proved so extraordinarily successful it not only propelled Metallica onto the same stratospheric plain as Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones, it did more to kill off thrash than grunge – its contemporaneous black sheep first cousin – ever could.

Up until that moment, the other thrash 'originals' – Slayer, Anthrax and Megadeth – had carved out a significant niche just by not being Metallica. After the Black album, though, the game was up. Incinerated in the furnace-like jet-stream of Metallica's commercial lift-off, thrash had become little more than an interesting footnote in the history of rock – until Metallica came back nearly 20 years later and breathed new life into it again with the disingenuously titled Big Four.

The Lars mustache era.

WORDS: MICK WALL/ IMAGE: GETTY

Dave Mustaine: I always thought Cliff was a great player. We didn't get a chance to have the kind of relationship that everyone wants to pretend that they had with him. It's like the guys who come up and say they went to school with me. You know what, there weren't enough seats in that classroom.

Lars Ulrich: I was obviously grieving, but then the anger started setting in when I realised it's not new that people in rock'n'roll die, but it's usually self-inflicted in terms of drink or drug abuse. He had nothing to do with it. It's so completely useless.

Brian Slagel: It must have been about four weeks later, Lars called me up and said: "We need a bass player. Do you have any ideas?" My first thought was Joey Vera from Armoured Saint, but he wanted to stay with those guys. Then I said, "We have this band called Flotsam And Jetsam, and the bass player's a huge Metallica fan. I think he's the right guy." Flotsam was Jason Newsted's band. He wrote everything. I told him, "You're going from a position where you can do that to a place where you'll have no say. This is the Lars and James show. You'll just be the bass player. Are you okay with that?" About a month later, he was in the band.

By the time Metallica made their return to the stage for the first time since the death of Cliff Burton, thrash metal had reached critical mass. Metallica found themselves joined at the top table by Slayer and Megadeth, whose albums *Reign In Blood* and *Peace Sells… But Who's Buying?*, were released within three weeks of each other in October and November on major label-distributed Def Jam and EMI subsidiary Capitol respectively. Both landed in the all-important US Top 100. The scene's detractors might not have liked it, but thrash metal had gone overground. Twenty five years on, 1986 looks and sounds like a landmark year. Things would never be the same for any of the bands involved.

Brian Slagel: They were all maturing and growing as musicians, and they were getting more money and time to do things, and they were working with better people. There was a hunger and a newness to what those American bands were doing, all that kind of culminated in that year.

Gem Howard: You get these peak periods in rock. 1956-57 is the rock'n'roll peak. 1966-67 was the hippy stuff. '76-77 was the punk thing. '86-87 was thrash. It's the 10-year cycle that seems to have finished now.

Charlie Benante: We went from Megaforce to Island, which was home to everyone from U2 to Bob Marley to Anthrax.

Bob Nalbandian: The major labels' mentality was: "Let's cash in on the current trend and milk it for all it's worth." And that's the reason why in the few years that followed, major labels started scooping up and signing all sorts of 'thrash' bands and it became over-saturated with a lot of crap, which eventually led to the decline of thrash in the late 80s and throughout the 90s.

Dave Ellefson: Getting on a major label was about getting the door open for our fans. 1986 was a big turning-point year, because the ones in the major labels who were fans began to fight the good fight. In order to be great, you gotta be different. And we knew we were different.

Gary Holt: Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer and Anthrax far and away sold the most records. I've read someone saying: "Exodus, Testament, those bands were followers, that's why they're not in the Big Four." Exodus precedes everyone but Metallica, but the issue comes down to sales. I have no problem with that. Those bands are all great friends of mine.

Dave Mustaine: We went through a lot of time of feeling like the red-headed step-child, so it was a pretty good feeling, yeah.

Jeff Hanneman: I made my mark on the world, man. I did something. I can die happy.

James Hetfield:
There are times when I romanticise it. Life seemed a lot more simple back then.

Additional sources: Enter Night: Metallica, The Biography, by Mick Wall [Orion], Metallica Unbound, by KJ Doughton [Grand Central Publishing], New York Times, Guitar World, Revolver. Metallica headline Download on Saturday, June 9, playing the Black album in its entirety. More info at www.downloadfestival.co.uk

A WILD RIDE OVER STONY GROUND

Eleven studio albums, 26 UK hit singles, more than 100 million records sold; one near-fatal car crash, one tragic death... This, and so much more, is the story of the first 40 years of **Def Leppard**.

Words: **Mick Wall** Photos: **Ross Halfin**

He's late. Which is unusual. In the four decades I've known him, Joe Elliott has always been the total professional – even when he's been hurting inside. But today, well, hey, he overslept. It's still early morning in London and he's just starting what will be a 12-hour day of interviews and promo and whatnot. After years of holding out against the digital tide, Def Leppard finally allowed their entire back catalogue to be available for streaming. The result has seen classic five-star Leppard landmarks like *Pyromania* and, in particular, *Hysteria*, fly straight to the top of charts all over the globe.

"We held out so long because the deal we had with our original label, Mercury, was at a time when CDs hadn't even been invented, let alone the idea of making all your music available to your phone," he explains. "We didn't even have mobile phones back then. So when our record deal ended [in 2009] we were able to decide what we wanted to do ourselves without pressure from anyone. But we were constantly on the road touring, people were still buying CDs and we just didn't really address the whole thing until the last couple of years."

So here he is this morning, in an old T-shirt, bleary, just out of bed. But he still looks a decade younger than his age, 58. Still has that dirty-blond dye in his longish straight hair, which suits him more than his natural smoke-dark hair. Still has hair, more to the point.

We have coffee, and he spoons a mountain of sugar into big cup of cappuccino. He chats about a piece he and Rick Savage just shot for *The One Show* – for which they went back to the tiny room in the Sheffield spoon factory where they used to rehearse as teens – performing an acoustic version of *Pour Some Sugar On Me*. It's a listed building, so the outside remains the same. But inside it's been renovated over the years. "It's a very arty place now, people making clothes, painters, stuff like that. But when I looked out the window it's like I'd been transported back to 1978."

Which is a good place to start. How old were you when you left Sheffield?

Twenty-one. I packed up a suitcase and a box of stuff, and I moved to London after the *On Through The Night* tour. But I'd kinda left home [already], because when we went on tour I was gone. I needed my own place by then. I'd made an album, for God's sake.

You moved into a flat in London that belonged to one-time Leppard drummer Frank Noon that you later described as "a frat house".
It was fantastic. There was me, Bernie Tormé, Frank, Colin Bond who played bass [for Stampede]. It was a bedsit, basically. A hundred and thirty pounds a month.

How old were you when you started to see real money coming in?
We were on thirty pounds a week even up to *Pyromania*, when we were selling out arenas. When I was living in Isleworth with my girlfriend we were both signing on. Once we were on tour we got a hundred dollars a week. You wonder how anyone ever got pissed.

I remember we were in Las Vegas in September 1983, and I actually finally went out and bought a video camera because I wanted to record some of this stuff. It cost five hundred pounds. I had to get [Leppard manager] Peter Mensch to advance me it – and we'd sold six million albums by then.

Even though Leppard became associated with the NWOBHM era – specifically through your coverage in *Sounds* magazine – your musical influences actually had very little to do with metal. You were a major Bowie fan, you loved Queen, Rod Stewart, Elton John…
Yes. My favourite Bowie period was from *Space Oddity* to *Diamond Dogs*, because it was glam rock. Mott The Hoople was another band I loved. When Queen came in and Bowie went to what he called his 'plastic soul' period with *Young Americans*, I loved that record but I was playing more Queen now. Maybe I just gravitate to bands. The gang factor, you know. I mean, the first two gigs I ever saw were T.Rex and the Faces. Chalk and cheese but awesome! I was eleven or twelve. The next gig I saw was Hunter-Ronson, March seventy-five. I was sixteen. It was amazing. From that moment onwards I went to just about every gig at the [Sheffield] City Hall – Sparks, Roxy, Skynyrd, Lizzy, Budgie. Rush's first ever gig in the UK was at Sheffield. One week I saw Styx followed by The Clash.

"We're gonna be big!" Even in the very early days they were full of confidence.

And yet by 1979-80 you're a 'new wave metal' band, whether you like it or not.
I was glad we were in *Sounds*, but you'd look at articles about us and go: "Look, man, where do you see a correlation in the musical styles between us and, say, Vardis?" Lumping us in with NWOBHM was like lumping us in with Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet.

"We were on thirty pounds a week even up to *Pyromania*, when we were selling out arenas."

Things changed for you once you got to America, though.
When we got to the States we were just Def Leppard. They weren't comparing us to anyone. They just embraced it and put it into the vast bucket of various things they would play on American FM radio.

Was it always the aim for Def Leppard to be big in America?
It wasn't the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, it was part of the big picture. It wasn't the end game. You know how hard we tried to break the UK. You know how much it meant to us when we finally had a hit here. America was easier, because it was bigger. The UK was so much more difficult. There was only one radio station. In America there was two per town – twenty-four hours a day. What did we have? Tommy Vance doing two hours on a Friday night? We tried and we tried, and in the end Bon Jovi did it for us. In between *Pyromania* and *Hysteria*, Bon Jovi came out with *Slippery When Wet* and put rock back on the radio. Which made it a lot easier for Leppard to finally get accepted in the UK.

Before that, though, you were being trashed even by the rock fans in the UK; the flash bastards that had sold out and taken the Yankee dollar.
We got trashed for being the band that sold out to America, because we wrote a song called *Hello America*. That was me in a basement with no natural light, dying to get out the basement. And that's all that was. We wanted America just the same way Maiden wanted it. But Maiden didn't get trashed for it like we did. We wanted it the same way that Zeppelin got it. We wanted it but we wanted it everywhere. We wanted global domination. We didn't see ourselves as this little local band. We had that mind space of wanting to be the biggest band in the world.

You were helped in that ambition because early on you ditched your home-town management team and signed with former Mercury A&R executive Cliff Bernstein and his partner Peter Mensch, formerly of Lieber-Krebs, then one of the biggest rock management companies in America, looking after Aerosmith, AC/DC, Scorpions et cetera.
We had already signed our record deal before Peter and Cliff became involved. We didn't meet Peter Mensch properly until we did the AC/DC *Highway To Hell* tour [in October 1979]. Rick Allen said to Mensch: "I want you to stand outside this door and listen to the conversation" with our original managers, Frank Stuart-Brown and Peter Martin. Because they just didn't get what we were trying to do. One day [Leppard guitarist] Pete Willis said to Frank Stuart-Brown: "Why don't we stop the show in the middle and do a juggling thing with some playing cards?" And the guy went: "Great idea!" Pete was like: "I'm taking the piss, you fucking idiot!"

That's when we had a meeting and said: "Peter, we want you to manage us." He said fine, but there will be consequences. And we basically had to write off [royalties] from the first two albums to Martin and Stuart-Brown because that's where the contracts were. Though it worked out well, because the first two albums didn't sell as well as everyone thought they would. Steve [Clark] was reluctant to get rid of Pete Martin cos he was his drinking buddy, but the rest of us were up for it.

Original guitarist Pete Willis, whose problems would eventually lead to him being fired.

Perm-anent member: bassist Rick Savage.

The other big hitter who had a big influence on your early success was legendary producer Robert John 'Mutt' Lange.

The first album, *On Through The Night*, was recorded relatively quickly, in just a few weeks, with producer Tom Allom, who was Judas Priest's producer at the time. We had no idea how important [Mutt coming in] would be at the beginning. We just hoped that it would be as important as it had been for AC/DC and Foreigner and the Boomtown Rats. Mutt was a pretty hard-core disciplinarian in those early days, but he needed to be. We thought you made records like we had with Tom Allom, where we basically played our live set.

[Mutt] put me and Rick Allen through the fucking wringer on *High 'N' Dry*. Reviewing it in *Sounds*, Geoff Barton said the biggest improvement in this and the first album was my vocals. Which it was. Mutt made me realise that somewhere deep down inside myself was a singer, not just a guy pretending to be one. And he knew Rick was a great drummer but he didn't want him to rely just on what he knew. He forced him to push on to the next level. With the guitars it was the same thing. He really worked them hard. But Pete was easy to work because Pete was a fantastic player – when he wasn't distracted by substances and stuff. Steve was in a tiny little shell, scared to death to come out of it. Sav was playing the bass, which was Mutt's instrument when he was in a band. He'd push us and push until we're going: "Fuck off. I'm not doing it again." And he'd go: "Fine. We'll come back to it tomorrow." We'd be like: "Do you talk to everybody in bands like this?" He'd be: "Yeah."

Mutt Lange would go on to produce the heady brace of albums that not only became the biggest-selling albums of Leppard's career, *Pyromania* (1983) and *Hysteria* (1987), but also would actually redefine ›

RICK SAVAGE

Leppard's founding bassist has been there every step of the way. We collared Sav to hear about the in-jokes, the albums that slipped between the cracks and why he'd rather play for the masses than for the hipsters.

Interview: **Henry Yates**

When you formed Leppard, did it feel like the start of a world-beating rock band?

In a strange kind of way it did. Whether every bunch of teenagers that starts a band feels that way, and whether it was just naïve enthusiasm, I don't know, but me and Joe definitely felt there was something special there. Looking back, there was no real grounds for it, because we were pretty rubbish. At that time, we knew we weren't super musicians, but we clicked when it came to coming up with ideas.

Back then, did Joe seem like he'd be one of the great rock frontmen of the eighties?

It was hard to say, because we'd never really heard him sing. It was his enthusiasm that got him the job, if you like. He'd be the first to admit that when we started he had to develop his voice. Not really improving it, but developing an identity with it. But in every other aspect he was born to do it.

"*ADRENALIZE* IS THE FIRST TIME I DON'T THINK WE PUT OUR HEART AND SOUL CORRECTLY INTO IT."

How has Leppard tested your friendship since then?

However your friendship was in those early years, regardless of what happens in the next forty you never lose it. Nothing's changed. It's like being in a bubble. We have the same jokes, we say the same quotes from *Fawlty Towers* and *Blackadder*. The world outside of the bubble gets older, and we just stay doing what we're doing. There's no need for fist-fights, or walking out and leaving tours, or bad-mouthing each other. The thought of that is just so alien to me.

Was Mutt Lange as tough on you as he was on everybody else?

Yeah. Every single element that went into a song was equally important. The sound of the hi-hat was as important as the voice. There was no favouritism and no bullying either. He would bring the best out of you without you ever feeling: "God, I hate this guy. Why can't we just go to the pub?" You'd just edge your way through the song, and when it was finished you'd think: "Bloody hell, that's actually quite good."

You've had plenty of good and bad luck, haven't you?

I know people have been quoted as saying: "They're the unluckiest band in the world." That's nonsense. We've had some bad things happen in the camp over the years, no doubt about that. But hasn't everybody?

Do you think you could have handled the situations with Steve and Pete differently?

With Pete, I think we were more patient than most people would be. We did give him a lot of chances to get himself straightened out. It wasn't as straightforward as "You're fired", it just comes to the point where it couldn't continue.

With Steve, it's really difficult when somebody is on this cycle of... I wouldn't say self-destruction, but just difficult to handle. It needs to come from that person to turn things around. They can get all the support and help, but that can only go so far.

Do you think Leppard lost their way after Steve's death?

It was a very difficult period in the life of the band. And it took us a long while to come out the other side. I personally feel like the whole *Adrenalize* album was an album made by people in a trance. I wasn't completely one hundred per cent there. And it's the first time I don't think we put our heart and soul correctly into it. We did as much as we could, but it just felt like we were sleepwalking through the process. And because of that, the album has a certain vibe and sound that, to me, doesn't have the unbelievable ground-breaking touches that the previous two albums did.

Do you think of yourself as the guardian of the band, in a sense?

Not really. Factually, it's me and Joe that have been in the band the longest. But you all develop little roles. Joe will always be the flag bearer and mouthpiece. I really don't like doing interviews. But Joe seems to thrive on it. He's such a fan of music and he loves representing the band. So why not? Go ahead!

What do you feel are Leppard's most underrated moments?

Slang kind of slipped between the cracks. At the time, the masses of the Leppard fans were expecting another *Pour Some Sugar* ›

On Me or *Do You Want To Get Rocked* [sic], which is what we were trying to distance ourselves from. We needed to do it for ourselves, or we'd have gone nuts trying to recreate the same sound.

None of the 'hipster' rock press wrote about Leppard, though. Did you care?
No. It may have been cause for a bit of a joke. When it comes to critical acclaim, we've always felt we were underrated. But you accept it. We were never the cool, credible band, ever. To us it was all about the songs. Not about a movement, not about a political standpoint or standing up for less fortunate people. That doesn't mean to say we disregarded those people, but we also believed the best way we could contribute was by letting people escape their boring lives for a couple of hours. Which I think is valid. It's pure entertainment.

You still play the hits, but you write new material too. Is it important to do both?
I don't have a problem playing the hits. Y'know, if you didn't want to play this song for forty years, then don't write it, or don't even be in the business. If someone said to you [as a kid]: "Forty years in the future, you'll still be playing this song because people love it so much," you'd snap their hand off. But I do think it's important to keep doing fresh things. Not necessarily for the fans, but for the internal workings of the band. It keeps us fresh, and that allows us to put fresh energy into even the old songs.

Are you glad that Leppard got big before the internet killed album sales?
I guess so, yeah. I must say I'm happy that we got together when we did. I would hate to be trying to do it all over again in 2018. Even being eighteen again. It's just different now. It's a different vibe. There's so many other distractions that teenagers have.

Do younger rock bands tell you that Leppard were an influence on them?
That probably only started happening in the late nineties, when bands started coming up to us and saying: "You guys were great." Whereas bands like Nirvana and Soundgarden would try and do anything to not sound like Def Leppard. Quite rightly.

Is another forty years of Leppard completely out of the question?
I'll be ninety-seven by then. I'd be happy just to still be breathing at that point. But there's no time limit on stuff like this. I mean, the Stones are going out this summer. And as long as they're performing to a level that doesn't disappoint people, why not? We were out with The Who in South America in October. Admittedly it's only Roger and Pete left, but the songs were played as great as they ever were. So the band live on. Same with Queen. We're still relatively young, y'know? It kinda works in our favour, because we've got ten or fifteen years on those guys. So while they're still doing it, it gives us something up to look up and try to achieve.

Flying the flag: just in case people didn't know which country they were from.

what a rock record could do in the 1980s. Those are the landmarks on which Leppard built their career.

Yet those years also came at an enormous personal cost for the band, beginning with the firing of Pete Willis on the eve of recording *Pyromania*, then segueing horrifically into the car crash on December 31, 1982 in which drummer Rick Allen lost his arm, again at the start of making an album, and ending just a year after the *Hysteria* world tour ended with the death of Steve Clark.

With Pete Willis, is it to correct to say his firing wasn't just down to drunkeness and drug stuff, you just didn't like him very much any more anyway?
I don't think Pete was a big coke-head. I think he smoked a lot of weed and drank a lot of alcohol. But he was belligerent after the sun went down and he'd been drinking. It wasn't that he wasn't coming up with the goods, because he did co-write that [*Pyromania*]. But all the sexy stuff was Mutt's arrangement and Sav's and Steve's writing. Pete would throw in the odd thing. But Pete would just avoid the situation if he didn't like what we were doing. I don't think he was that keen in the direction the band was going in. Whereas we wanted to go a bit more commercial pop, he didn't really want to go there.

Pete told me he'd offered to go and see a shrink, like Steve had, as a last resort, but that you all said no. Is that true?
That's absolutely true. Everybody – Mensch, Bernstein, friends, family, road crew, other bands – was saying to us how many more last chances are you gonna give this guy? We gave him hundreds. I rang Phil [Collen] on the *High 'N' Dry* tour and said: "Can you learn twelve or fourteen songs in two days? Because if you can we're gonna fire him now." I got talked down off the ledge with that one.

"Lumping us in with NWOBHM was like lumping us in with Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet."

Steve wouldn't get drunk until the end of the gig. He never turned up at the studio incapable of playing. Not until the very, very end. But with Pete it had been going on for two years. I remember Mutt coming to us and laughing and saying: "You've got to come and hear this solo." We go in and Pete was trying to play the back of his guitar, he was that drunk. Two bottles of brandy, and when he got up the next day he couldn't even stand. I got so angry, because he'd promised us it wouldn't happen any more.

So World Cup Final day, 1982, we had Pete driven down from Sheffield to London – awkward for the guy driving. Everybody knew what was gonna happen. We said we can't deal with this any more. "I'm sorry, Pete. I'm really, really sorry, but we're done." He said: "What if I go and see a shrink?" I was the one that said no to that. "No. If you really thought that that would solve the problem, you'd have done it already."

What was it about Phil that you thought he would bring to the group?
Number one, he's a brilliant guitar player and writer and singer. But I didn't know half the things that I know now when he first joined. Musically, we bought the same records in the same week, growing up. I didn't know that, but when we did get together all those things were in the background ready to be discussed. We still argue over which of us bought the first Montrose album first.

He'd stayed at my mum and dad's house when Girl [with Collen their guitarist] opened for UFO in Sheffield. We hung out, me, Steve, Phil and [Girl singer] Phil Lewis. We got up on Sledgehammer's gear in the Genevieve, which was actually a disco. We asked if we could have a go on their gear. I went on the drums, Steve went on the bass, Phil on guitar and Phil Lewis sang, and we did *You Really Got Me*, and *Do You Love Me* by Kiss. It was hilarious. Steve lay

down on the drum riser and passed out. But he didn't pass out and try and beat everybody up. Pete was a nasty little piece of work when he'd a drink. Everybody else in this band just threw up and went to sleep [laughs]. Until Steve passed out and never woke up again.

We've had some major problems in this band with alcohol. Pete wasn't great at it and eventually Steve wasn't great at it. But at the time, when it was still neck and neck, no way we were ever gonna fire Steve, because he kept coming up with stuff, and he'd be okay the next day after a shower and some breakfast. He never, ever drank until the encore.

When *Pyromania* took off so spectacularly, were you relieved, surprised, scared… What happened?
The honest truth about *Pyromania* is we were at that stage of our lives where we thought it was about time. We thought it was due. We looked at other bands and we thought the album that we'd made was up there and beyond other bands that were more successful than we'd been. And when it was our time we all kind of looked at each other and went, yeah, we did the right thing. This is exactly what we wanted. The first gig we did with Phil in the band was at the Marquee club in London in February 1983. Seven months later we did Mac Murphy Stadium in San Diego, the last show of the American tour, in front of fifty-five thousand people.

The US tour had begun that year with Leppard opening for Billy Squier, but your tour shirt was outselling Squier's by a ratio of ten to one. Then you began your own headline tour with Uriah Heep supporting, then Gary Moore. Meanwhile, the album's taking off like a rocket.
The headline tour started out a bit spotty. The first gig we did was somewhere in Texas and there were maybe four or five thousand people in this arena that held probably ten. Then three weeks later it really started to kick off cos *Photograph* really took off [as a single] and *Rock Of Ages* kind of cemented it. By June, which was a mere six weeks later, we were selling out faster than the last Led Zeppelin tour – arenas selling out in three minutes!

You should have been all set for your next album. But Mutt was busy making *Foreigner 4*, so you brought in Meat Loaf svengali Jim Steinman to produce. And it went horribly wrong.
That's an understatement. Eventually Steve and Phil just called a meeting and said he's got to go. I didn't even work with him. I didn't record one note of the vocals. It didn't get that far. I do remember all [Steinman's] farting around, though. ➢

RICK ALLEN

Having joined the band in '78, Leppard's drummer has come through adulation, addiction and amputation without missing a beat.

Interview: **Henry Yates**

It's 1978. How does a fourteen-year-old kid come to be in Def Leppard?
I'd been playing with local bands, just beer money and covers. At the ripe old age of fourteen I was ready to quit the business – I say that with tongue-in-cheek. But that very same day, I saw an article in the *Sheffield Star*: 'Leopard Loses Skins'; at that time it was still Deaf Leopard. They were looking for a drummer. And when we met up at The Limit club in Sheffield, we realised we'd probably all rubbed shoulders at the same gigs – The Sweet, Thin Lizzy, you name it. When they told me about this EP they'd just recorded, I got this sense of being lifted up. They were writing their own music, and that to me was huge.

What do you remember about the audition?
A few days later we went down to the rehearsal space at the spoon factory. Two other drummers showed up. One was [original drummer] Tony Kenning, who wanted his job back, but they'd already told me he's more interested in his girlfriend than in coming to rehearsal. I went last – which kinda gave me the opportunity to learn the parts in the few minutes I had – and when I played with them there were smiles all round. Lo and behold I got the job. I joined around about my fifteenth birthday. Crazy.

"WE KEEP LEARNING FROM OUR SUCCESSES AND OUR MISTAKES. THAT'S WHAT KEEPS IT VIBRANT."

Who was leading the band in those formative days?
Joe was always a great driving force. Whatever he says about what he lacked in talent, he definitely didn't lack in his knowledge of music. And confidence, just getting up there and doing it. I really looked up to him as someone who fired everybody up.

Joe told us about your involvement in cutting ties with the band's original management.
I thought it was the right decision. I was so naïve at that time, I didn't know what I was doing. But I remember grabbing Peter Mensch and saying: "Come here, have a listen." So we stood outside the door, and our old management team were in the room arguing about something. It was so juvenile, the way they communicated. For them to bring that conflict within earshot of us wasn't very professional. That was it. I guess Peter and Clifford had their eye on us for a while. After they saw us opening up for AC/DC, I think they got it.

Joe told us that Mutt was pretty brutal with you during the making of *High 'N' Dry*.
That was the first time I really experienced hard work, and actually got to the point where I doubted my ability as a player. Because Mutt had this wonderful psychology. He never said you were doing it wrong. He just had a set of criteria – y'know, good vibe, good timing, in tune, whatever – that made you challenge yourself. I learnt more about playing drums doing that record than at any other time.

Did becoming a millionaire in the mid-eighties make you happy?
I wouldn't necessarily say so. I think it's an inside job – you're either a happy kind of person or not. I must admit I've been through some really depressing times, but whether I felt happy or depressed it never had anything to do with money. I always felt like it was something within me, things I needed to overcome, whether that was demons, self-medication, you name it. Eventually I made the right choices, and now I guess I'm pretty consistent – I don't go to the lows that I used to. But I don't think money has anything to do with it. To be honest, after my accident, because the record [*Hysteria*] was taking so long, I found myself pretty much penniless.

Do you think Leppard might have sounded different had you not lost your arm?
I think so. Mutt being Mutt, I think he saw an opportunity, he didn't necessarily see a setback. And actually that was a big part of my healing – to stop comparing myself to how I used to be, and other drummers, and embrace how unique this was and how it could set us apart from everybody else. That was a big factor in me getting better as a person and a player, to shed that weight of "God, I wish I could play the way I used to", or "God, I wish I could play like that guy." Instead it was like: "This is where I am. I can't go back. I may as well go forward." A lot of that inspiration came from Mutt. He embraced it.

Joe said that after the accident, you locked yourself away in Wisseloord Studios for five months and re-learned to play. What are your memories of that period?
It became an obsession. I didn't want to let them down. I didn't want to let myself ➢

down. I just figured the more time I could get behind a drum kit – and especially a new kind of electronic drum kit – the more knowledge I would gather. The guys were in there too [recording *Hysteria*], and I was in what was almost like a sound booth. So I could see everything that was going on around me, and that inspired me even more. I got a lot of encouragement from the guys. They obviously wanted me to succeed. At other times I just needed to be left alone.

Did you push drum technology forward?
Phil was over at our rehearsal studios a few months back, and Neil Peart was in the studio next door, and he was getting prepped for the Rush tour. And Neil said to Phil: "If it wasn't for your drummer Rick, electronic drums would not be where they are today." I thought that was a massive compliment, especially coming from somebody like him.

Do you think Leppard have had the critical respect they deserve?
There was a bit of a stigma attached to rock bands. I don't know what it was. It amazes me that sometimes people don't see that we're a working band, and we continue to get better. I was really surprised that certain journalists didn't see or feel it the way I did, because I felt like we were a force to be reckoned with. And I think now, more and more people are getting that.

Do you mind Joe being the mouthpiece of the band?
He's the master of ceremonies. He has a vast knowledge of music. He was the driving force behind Leppard, and I love the fact he can do that. When I'm on stage I have a drum kit to hide behind. He has a microphone. It's the fact that he can put himself out there with so much confidence, be comfortable in his own skin. That's something that I couldn't do. In the same way that he'll admit he can't do what I do.

Do you think Def Leppard are a lucky or an unlucky band?
A bit of both. There were plenty of ups and downs. And it's the downs that make you grow, whether that's what happened to me, or Steve, or Pete not being with us any more. I think all of those things build character.

Have the friendships within the band changed over forty years?
Everybody's got their idiosyncracies, including myself, and I'm sure I've pissed people off along the way. But I think ultimately there is a bond, a brotherhood, that just gets stronger. I think the one thing that keeps us strong is realising the chemistry of the band, and not allowing those negative times to pull us apart.

Forty years. That's a hell of a milestone.
Yeah. We didn't think we were going to make it past next week. We're a work in progress and we keep learning from our successes and our mistakes. That's what keeps it vibrant.

Rick Allen with the drum kit that saved his career.

"I want to change the carpet in the control room, I don't like the colour." He'd already had the carpet changed in his hotel. At meals, you'd pass him the menu and, blasé, he'd just toss it to his personal [assistant] and go: "Just order one of everything." Yeah, but we're paying for that! Fuck off!

With Steinman gone you eventually worked your way back to having Mutt come in and do the job. Only by then Rick had lost his arm. That became such a defining moment in the Def Leppard story.
Rick losing his arm put the Steinman thing in the shade. We had a Christmas break. I'm living in Cobham, in Surrey, very nice, and my mum and dad were down with me and my girlfriend, for the holidays. The afternoon of New Year's Eve, the phone rang, and I was expecting "Happy New Year" from Pete Way or Brian May, whoever. No, it was Mensch. He said: "Are you sat down?" Which immediately told me someone had died. Then he told me that Rick had crashed his car. I said: "Is he dead?" He said: "No. But he's lost his arm." He's a drummer, he can't lose his arm! That's when your brain goes into serious spin mode. Your skin goes cold and clammy. You've got these weird mental and physical emotions going off. I remember bursting into tears and thinking: poor kid. He was twenty-one. And he's just come off a six-million-selling record, and it's probably all over. Because I did think that for a couple of days. Why would I not?

I went to visit him when they'd actually reattached the arm. His brother said: "His hand is warm – touch it." I didn't want to. But I did, and his hand was warm. His arm was back on. Wow, great. We leave and – boom! – they take it off again. They were scared that gangrene would set in. So that's a double whammy. Thank God for him he was in an induced coma, so he never went through that emotion of knowing he'd had it back and it'd come off again – till long after the fact.

Out of all that was why the album was called *Hysteria*. We had paparazzi trying to take pictures of him in hospital. So we had security and he was up on the eleventh floor. Crazy. Then later, when we were trying to come with a title for the album, Rick just said: "Why don't we just call it Hysteria?" Harking back to all that ridiculousness. Because hysteria can go two ways: it can be running to the front at a Cheap Trick concert, or it can be running from a hydrogen bomb.

"We wanted global domination. We didn't see ourselves as this little local band."

Within two months of the accident, he was back in the studio. Pete Hartley was a local drum technician and electronic genius in Sheffield who'd started to build Rick this kit where, basically, instead of hitting the snare drum with his hand, he hit a pedal on the floor with his foot. Rick locked himself away in a little room in Wisselord studios, in Amsterdam, wouldn't let anybody hear him play for five months. Not a peep.

Then one day he came into the control room and said: "I want you all to come and listen to something." We went in and he played *When The Levee Breaks* by Led Zeppelin. And it was like our bones melted, because we all just sank to the floor. It was amazing. We couldn't believe it. I mean, he still had a long way to go before he'd be ready to get back on stage, and it wasn't all plain sailing; he got addicted to some really bad drugs for a while. But I look back at it now and I go: "I'm not surprised."

Savage and Elliott with Jim Steinman at Wisseloord studios in 1984.

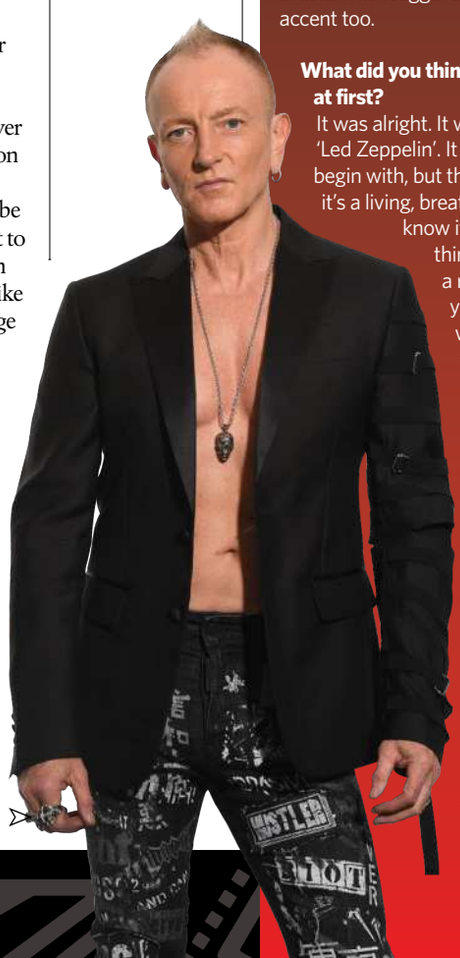
That drum kit was state of the art in 1985, and it's been replaced over the years as technology has improved. Does Rick still have it?
When we did the *Viva Hysteria* shows, we had a little Def Leppard museum in the lobby and I saw the original kit. Oh my God! It looks like *Jurassic Park* compared to what he's playing now.

Hysteria was released in 1987 and became the biggest-selling album of your career. And it's still one of the greatest, most innovative, forward-looking rock albums of all time.
When we got accused in the early eighties of selling out, it was by people who were into more heavy metal music. But when *Hysteria* sold a million copies in the UK alone it showed we were right to not worry about what those sorts of fans thought. We ended up with a much bigger fan base who just loved the band for what it really was. When people saw us on *Top Of The Pops* doing *Animal*, they heard a really great song that style-wise had more in common with INXS or U2, The Police with *Roxanne*, something like that. And that was the band we wanted to be. We wanted to be like Queen-meets-AC/DC. We wanted the power of a band like AC/DC on *Highway To Hell*, but we wanted the musical space to grow into like Queen had. We wanted to do slow, medium, fast, acoustic, electric, whatever we wanted.

It's amazing how that album still resonates to this day. When it was reissued with our other albums it went to number one in America in the 'catalogue chart'. We had the top three places: *Hysteria* was at number one, *Pyromania* number two and *Vault* at number three.

And it had your first – and so far only – US number one single in *Love Bites*, a lush ballad that had such a futuristic sound it was like a modern *I'm Not In Love*; this great song couched in state-of-the-art studio futurism.
I can't believe the amount of people that have come up to us and gone: "I can't believe that lyric. It's like you were in our kitchen writing that lyric, watching us argue." That's because it's about human interaction, human nature. We were never going to be a band that spent ten songs on an album singing about dungeons and fucking dragons. It was always going to be about what most people relate as closest to them, which is probably another human being. Yes, we'd tackled drugs in songs like *From The Inside*, and we dabbled in revenge and the non-interaction of humans, which is what *Die Hard The Hunter* is all about. Then things like *Gods Of War*, which is about standing in Finland, at the time, watching the missiles going over, cancelling each other out, from American and Russia, thinking: "How futile is this?"

We suddenly had the most creative period of our career. And that's when we came up with *Pour Some Sugar On Me*. Nothing was out of the question on that album. We'd go out to a gay disco in Holland – because those were the only clubs near Wisselord – And hear the new electronic beats and stuff that were going on, then go into the studio the next day and tell Mutt



PHIL COLLEN

The guitar wizard's arrival in the band in 1982 heralded the best and worst of times. He looks back on breaking America, crap band names and how "we had more in common with Earth, Wind & Fire than with Iron Maiden".

Interview: **Henry Yates**

You joined Leppard in 1982. Did you have high hopes?
We knew we had a special album. *Pyromania* was different to anything I'd heard. I had all the fun stuff, none of the heavy lifting – that came on *Hysteria*. Pete and Steve had done these amazing rhythm guitar beds and it was a joy to whizz around and play solos over the top. It was just hooks – *Photograph*, *Rock Of Ages*, *Foolin'*, *Stagefright*. Mutt was going: "Just have fun, be a lead guitarist, go nuts." In America it was a radio hit almost immediately. That was the most exciting period, going from playing for half-empty theatres in England to headlining arenas.

Did it hurt that the UK was slower than America to embrace Leppard?
It didn't bother me at all. It's an American art form. I learnt from listening to the Stones and The Who, and they learnt from listening to American artists – everything from Stevie Wonder to Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters, Aretha Franklin, blues-based, soul-based, all that stuff. Someone once asked me: "Why do you sing with an American accent?" And it's because I learnt from all these American artists. Mick Jagger sings with an American accent too.

What did you think of the band's name at first?
It was alright. It was a bit of a spoof on 'Led Zeppelin'. It was a bit quirky to begin with, but then it kinda stuck. And it's a living, breathing entity before you know it. Names are a weird thing. 'The Beatles' is a really crap name when you weigh it up, but you wouldn't change that for the world.

What were your first impressions of the guys in the band?
Well, I knew 'em before that. Joe and Steve would come down to London and stay on my mum's couch, and she'd make them beans on toast. And when I was on tour with Girl, me and Phil Lewis slept in Joe's spare room because we'd been out jamming at this little club in Sheffield. The funny thing is, when I joined the band, the accent was so thick. I remember Rick Allen saying something and I had to read his lips. And back then I had a very distinct East London accent. But over the years, living in the States, we've all kind of mellowed out.

How do you think your arrival changed Leppard's sound?
I had a kinda aggressive, shouty singing voice, and all of a sudden that was a feature. And my guitar playing was very different, somewhere between Ritchie Blackmore, Eddie Van Halen and Michael Schenker.

"OUR AMBITION WASN'T REALLY TO BE FAMOUS. WE WANTED TO MAKE GREAT MUSIC AND FOR PEOPLE TO REALLY DIG IT."

Joe said critics would always lump Leppard in with NWOBHM.
I thought we had more in common with Earth, Wind & Fire or The Police than we did with Iron Maiden.

How about the old chestnut that Leppard albums are overproduced?
We wanted them to be like that. They weren't gratuitously overproduced. There was a reason for it. When you hear someone overdoing it in the studio for no other reason than the songs are crap, that's something else. These songs were great. I was listening to Queen today. Amazing. You listen to those records now and they're pure bliss and magic. And they got accused of overproducing. There's a lot of lazy bands who won't work a song properly. They'll just write a song and record it. That works occasionally, but for most mere mortals, it requires a bit of hard work.

How would you describe the Leppard work ethic?
A lot of musicians are really lazy. We've worked our asses off. And what I find is that most people are not prepared to work that hard. I just did a TV show in upstate New York. They told me: "Well, it's an early start, eight in the morning." And I told them: "I get up at six every day." People are not prepared to do that. With Mutt, we would work until we fell asleep. I can actually remember waking up once and seeing Steve, Joe and Mutt asleep on the floor or on the couch. We'd been in the middle of a song, but it had got really late – like, six in the morning – and everybody had just drifted off.

When _Hysteria_ took off did anyone in the band start acting like a rock star?
Not really. We've all been guilty of time-of-the-month things. But no. We'd worked

so hard, and gone through so much. Rick had the accident, and we'd spent all this money on the record. Plus our parents were all English and they'd lived through the Blitz. There was a shared value system that we all had. I think that really helped us not be blasé or take anything for granted. Our ambition wasn't really to be famous. We wanted to make great music and for people to really dig it. The rock star thing is all fine and dandy, but you've got to be able to back it up; you've got to be able to write songs. And not be a dickhead.

When you think of Steve, does it make you feel happy or sad?
Both. I think of him every single day. He was my best friend. When I think of shitty, sad things about Steve, it's usually followed by something that makes me smile.

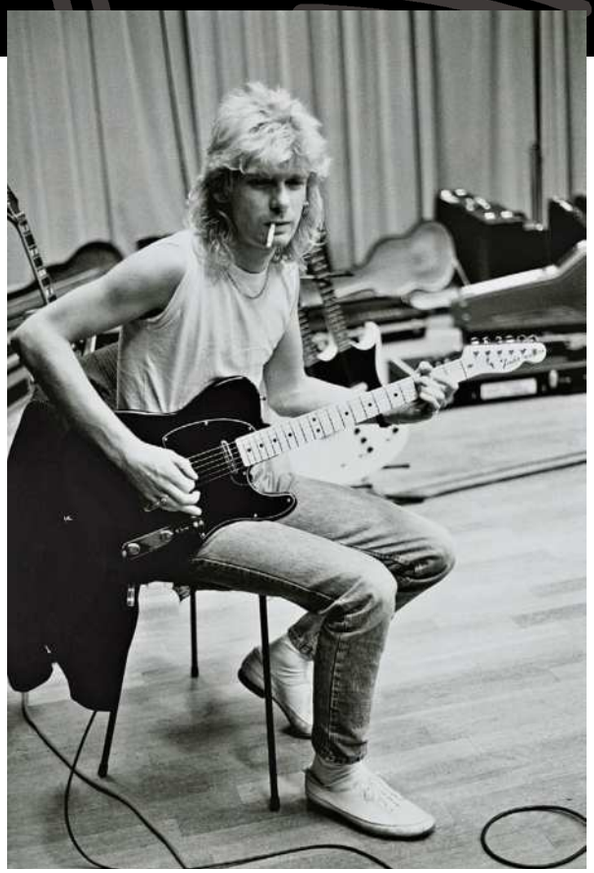
What have been the most difficult times commercially in the band?
After Steve died and we were doing the *Slang* album, and the musical landscape changed. Y'know, Nirvana came out, which I thought was a breath of fresh air, because it had got really stale with these really naff bands – hair-metal stuff. No lyrical content, no vibe, just a bunch of people with good hair products. So Nirvana came out – and Pearl Jam and STP and all these bands – and it was a bit like the punk thing in England. It changed the landscape. Unfortunately we got caught up in that. I thought *Slang* was great, but it came out at a weird time, and we were not very popular at that moment.

What's the secret to never splitting up?
It's ego. It's how you were raised. It's your value system. People get so big-headed and stroppy.

How do you think the classic Leppard material has aged?
Well, the other day, on the G3 tour, I was trying out John Petrucci's rig. I plugged my guitar in and ended up playing all these *Hysteria* songs to see how they sounded. And they sounded amazing. And then, when I listened to the record, it doesn't sound dated at all, because of what went into it.

For you, does commercial success trump critical acclaim?
I like the fact that millions of people went out and bought our record. That, to me, is a bit more [important]. Especially as I get older. I had a very interesting tip once from Ian Hunter. He said: "When you reach fifty-five you'll stop worrying what anyone thinks about you. You won't care if a twenty-year-old judges you." And he was absolutely right.

Which do you consider to be the 'classic' Def Leppard line-up?
We play better right now. We sing better right now. The last tour was the best we've ever sounded, I've got no doubt. Pioneer-wise, I think *Hysteria* was it. But as far as the band being the best it's ever been, it's absolutely right now.



Steve Clark: a wonderful guitarist, but he could not escape his downward spiral.

about it. That's how we got tracks like *Excitable*. Tracks like *Animal* also changed from how they'd been before. We kept the vocals and drums, then had Steve, Phil and Sav sit in the control room with their guitars and see what they came up with.

Back on tour in America as the album rises up the charts, once again you're all going through your own personal struggles. Phil Collen stopped drinking completely after a night on the town with Steve Clark during the making of *Hysteria*. Then you stopped drinking too, for the duration of the *Hysteria* tour. Was that also related to what happened to Pete, and to Steve's growing drinking problem?
Nothing to do with what you think at all. We were five shows into that in-the-round tour. I was in bed in a hotel after the show, and I remember staring at the ceiling, not being able to sleep, going: "I can't do this if I drink." It took me five gigs to figure it out.

In-the-round is an incredibly, insanely aerobic kind of thing to do – and try and sing as well. And those songs… We were trying to replicate an album that is still to this day state-of-the-art. We were still learning how to do it. First night, in Glenn Falls, I got to four songs in and started hyperventilating. I went down my hole on the side of the stage, during a Phil solo. End up breathing into a paper bag.

So I stared at the ceiling, not being able to sleep, thinking: "How am I gonna get through two hundred and twenty more shows if this is how it's gonna be?" So I quit. Because it was hard in-the-round. It was really hard. For a singer. You can't stand still, you've got to keep moving. The guys had identical microphones on either side of the stage, so they could stand still for a little bit. I had to keep moving all the time. It was insane. And I just couldn't have done it drinking. No way.

"We were never going to be a band singing about dungeons and fking dragons."**

Meanwhile, Steve seemed to be falling apart on that tour whenever I visited.
I remember reading articles where you were out on the road with us on various parts of that tour, and just you and Steve would be in his room, and he would open up to you and bitch. And you'd probably think, fuck, what kind of organisation is he in. But he was only like that with you. You were like his mentor or his confidant. There was nobody else that he ever did that for. And those negatives that you got out of him were only literally those nights that you were there. He wasn't doing this to people every other night you weren't around. He didn't pick another Mick Wall from another town and bitch and moan. You were the only person he trusted to talk like that for. I guess he was harbouring certain negatives in his thing. But he just put them to one side for the rest of the tour.

It wasn't like he was this miserable wanker. He was a funny guy, man. He was a really good guy. When Pete got angry, Steve got sad. Steve's past came back to haunt him. He had some childhood issues that I don't really want to go into. You can only imagine what they were. And they were the reason he drank, I think, personally. But I don't want to get sued by people so I'm not gonna go any further on that one. Use your imagination. But he wanted it [success]. He loved it. Would he have gone out there as a solo artist and achieved the success he achieved? Absolutely not. He needed other people to pull him into that situation. When they did, he delivered. He was like a circus. "Ladies and gentleman, we're pulling out the guy that we're gonna shoot out the cannon." He'd willingly get in the cannon. He wasn't the entire circus, but he wanted to be *in* the circus. That's the best way I can put it.

After *Hysteria*, Def Leppard took a long break, before coming back together to work on material for their next album. Again, Mutt wasn't available to fill the producer's chair. He was working with Bryan Adams on what would become the squillion-selling *Waking Up The Neighbours* album, complete with the number-one-forever hit *(Everything I Do) I Do It For You*. Mutt did, however, involve himself in the writing process with Leppard, and, as Elliott puts it now, "was only ever a phone call away". Yet in a tragically weird echo of *Pyromania* and

Hysteria, Leppard fell foul of fortune when Steve Clark went to sleep one night in January 1991 and never woke up again.

We touched on Steve's death earlier, and you've talked about it at length in *Classic Rock* in recent times. Can I just ask you this: were you relieved, in the sense of seeing someone clearly so pained and broken finally out of their misery, and also in terms of allowing the band to carry on without that burden?

In no specific order, I felt incredibly sad when I heard that he'd died. But there was a part of me that was actually quite relieved. Cos I knew it was gonna happen sooner or later. At least now we can both be at peace with it and move on. We'd given him six months off, told him to go and spend some time in the beautiful house he'd bought in Chelsea, eat some food he'd cooked himself, and take his clothes out of the suitcase and put them in the wardrobe. But instead he spent most of his time in the pub round the corner, and do things like get so drunk he'd fall down the stairs and crack his rib. So he'd be on serious [pain] medication for cracked ribs. Then he'd carry on drinking. That's how he died. It wasn't cocaine. He had morphine, probably, cos he was on prescription painkillers. He washed it down with vodka and never woke up. Just fell asleep so deep he just died.

If he hadn't died but instead come back after six months still messed up on booze, would you have made the decision to let him go?

Yes. That's the honest answer to that. But that's why we gave him six months off. Pete Willis, we wanted him to go. With Steve we wanted him to come back. He was creative, he was our friend, he was in pain. The stuff that happened around Steve's drinking and was unreported – and will stay unreported – just puts you in that head-space where you go: "I just don't want to do this any more."

On tour, if I was in the hotel room next to his, there were times I'd think I'd be very surprised if he doesn't wake up in the morning. I'd see him the next day and go: "What the fuck was going on last night?" Noises and just shit going off in his room. I don't miss that. That used to stress me out unbelievably. And I don't have that any more. That's what I mean when I say ≻

VIV CAMPBELL

After 1992's *Adrenalize*, the Irish journeyman helped Leppard turn the corner in a tough commercial decade. A quarter-century later, he reflects on hard times, absent friends and matching pyjamas.

Interview: **Henry Yates**

Rewind to 1992. What made you want to join Def Leppard?

I was always a fan. I had their first single. I always thought they were head and shoulders above everything else that was happening with that whole NWOBHM movement. There was Leppard, there was Iron Maiden, and then there was a bunch of others who were nowhere near as good.

The first time I met them, I was in Whitesnake. We had a day off and we all went to the Leppard show in Detroit. After that, Joe kept in touch, because we had mutual friends in Dublin. We'd go to dinner, play pool, talk shite. A year after Steve had passed away, Joe called me to say that now they'd finished *Adrenalize* they'd decided to continue as a five-piece and were looking for another guitar player, and would I be interested. Had it been any other band on the planet, I'd have said no. I'd been in and out of so many bands and I was really burnt by it all. But this was Def Leppard, one of the biggest bands in the world. Certainly the most ambitious band in the hard rock genre by a country mile.

"I CAN SAY OBJECTIVELY – BECAUSE I WASN'T IN THE BAND THEN – THAT *HYSTERIA* IS ONE OF THE GREATEST FKING RECORDS OF ALL TIME."**

Your backing vocals changed the sound of the band immediately.

Something that not a lot of people knew about me was that I was actually a pretty good singer. Back in the Dio days, Ronnie never wanted me to sing. And I'm sure I wasn't very good. I remember asking: "Ronnie, can I sing backups?" And he said: "No! Ritchie Blackmore never sang. Tony Iommi never sang. Guitar players play guitar. Singers sing. Get over there!" So that was me shut down. In Whitesnake, Coverdale was actually very encouraging about my nascent vocal aspirations and turned me on to a vocal coach. So I'd worked on it pretty hard. By the time I got into a rehearsal room with Leppard I think it was a pleasant surprise to the guys that I could elevate the band's vocals. I don't think Steve Clark was much into singing.

Did you ever feel bad about taking over from Steve?

It was obviously a difficult situation. By that stage I was used to walking into bands with Dio and Whitesnake. But for them [Leppard] it must have been very difficult. To this day, I'm sure when they look over stage-right and it's not Steve, that's gotta be strange. I've always tried to be very respectful of the fact that I'm walking in Steve's shoes, because maybe even ninety per cent of what we play is music that Steve created.

Your arrival coincided with tougher commercial times. Did you feel the downturn?

Oh yeah, absolutely. It was quite soul-destroying, actually. It was just bad timing, I guess. I wasn't involved in the *Adrenalize* record. I stepped into the band for that tour, which was something like fifteen months. And I mean, we started the tour as a huge, long-haired, dressed-up arena-rock band, and we finished it looking like Pearl Jam, wearing ratty jeans, growing goatees and cutting our hair. During the course of that fifteen-month tour the entire musical landscape changed.

Right off the back of that, we went in to do *Slang*. It was such a strange time in the music business. It was such a strange time to be in Def Leppard. And this was my first album with them. It was a bit of a double whammy. So I have very mixed feelings about *Slang*. In some ways it's incredible, in other ways it's disappointing to me. But it is what it is. And I think it was pretty much all we could do. The only thing we knew for sure at that time period was that we couldn't be Def Leppard; we couldn't go in and make a record that was off the heels of *Adrenalize*.

When I've interviewed you in the past, I've sometimes got the impression you wish Leppard would stop being so obsessive in the studio and just get on with it.

I think it's fair to say that I'm the one guy in the band [who has that attitude]. Because I didn't grow up in that mentality. But I fully understand why the band operates that way. My first album was [Dio's] *Holy Diver*, where we wrote the songs and we played them in real time with Ronnie. That's what I'm used to. I think there's pros and cons to both approaches. Sometimes things ≻

benefit from stepping back and having a bit of perspective, and getting in there and thinking about things, and sometimes you get lost in the forest.

Do you feel like Leppard gets the critical respect they deserve?
Well, put it this way. Back in the eighties I remember thinking: "Def Leppard never got a Grammy." I can say objectively – because I wasn't in the band then – that *Hysteria* is one of the greatest fucking rock records of all time. In fact it's one of the greatest records of all time, aside from the rock genre. And not only did it not win a Grammy, it didn't even get nominated. I think that really summed it up for me.

I think it's a little different now. Because the band has been together forty years, we're beginning to step into the same company of these other great British bands. I think you get a lot more respect if you stay the course.

If you weren't all in a band together, would you still be friends?
To some degree, yeah. We have a lot in common, but there's also a lot we don't have in common. We tour pretty much every year with other bands of our generation, and I think we're the only one that still shares a dressing room. I think that says a lot. It's not like we wear matching pyjamas and go on holiday together, but we sit together in the same room and prepare for the show, and we undress afterwards and have a post-mortem. I can honestly say that almost every other band of our generation does not share a dressing room… so they obviously don't get along too well [laughs].

Some bands just roll out the hits. How important is it for Leppard that they write new music?
I think it's vital to the lifeblood of any band, to remain creative. It doesn't matter that not so many people want to buy a new record now. I've been seeing more and more kids coming to our shows, particularly in America, but all around the world, and I do honestly believe that's the upside of music piracy. A lot of these kids haven't bought records for the last fifteen years, but they became exposed to the music, they became fans of the band and now they're coming to the shows. And I don't mean being dragged by their parents, they're coming on their own. That's very encouraging. We're growing our audience. We're continuing to write new music to remain a vital and creative force.

Do Leppard still have creative gas in the tank?
Very much so. More than ever, actually. I think everyone in this band is at the peak of their game.

Twenty-three years later, are you proud to say you're in Def Leppard?
Definitely. It's a unique band. I don't think there's ever been another band like Def Leppard. I'm sure there never will be.

Hello America: (l-r) Viv Campbell, Rick Allen, Joe Elliott, Phil Collen, Rick Savage.

I was a bit relieved. Because I knew I wouldn't have to suffer his pain and neither would he.

You then made *Adrenalize* as a four-piece. Good album, but not in the same league as *Hysteria*. Fair comment?
We coped without Mutt quite well, because we'd grown up a little bit. We used the tools that we'd developed, only now we were a bit more qualified and mature to make decisions. We had a stronger and more confident opinion on how we should be doing things. Mutt was in his studio in Guildford with Bryan Adams and we'd be in Dublin, talking every day, even to Bryan. But it wasn't as adventurous as *Hysteria*. It was more of a rock album, less experimental. It's like with Pink Floyd, to me *Adrenalize* was our *Wish You Were Here*, and *Hysteria* was our *Dark Side Of The Moon*.

That all changed for the next album, *Slang*, but that was more because of the arrival on the scene of cold, rainy grunge. Correct?
The landscape had completely changed. The fans that bought *Adrenalize* hadn't gone away, but there was a new generation of kids that came of record-buying age as MTV were showing videos by Nirvana, Alice In Chains, Pearl Jam and Soundgarden. We kept doing what we were doing but we knew things had changed.

Not so much, though, that you didn't stay in touch with the charts around the world. The single *Two Steps Behind* in 1993 was top-five in the US. *When Love And Hate Collide*, from the '95 *Vault* compilation, was a huge hit in the UK. I recall hearing you being interviewed on Radio One about it and you sounded so pleased – and surprised.
I remember talking to Jon Bon Jovi, and we were like: "Where the fuck are we gonna go now? What's going on?" Everybody was saying it's all over for you guys, and it just makes you go, okay, maybe the major rock bands rolled over in the seventies when punk came along, but we ain't gonna roll over that easily. It was like we had these little pockets of happiness that were enough to keep us going, doing what we do. We had the biggest hit we'd ever had in the UK by releasing a tune that went all the way back to the eighties, but in 1995.

***Slang* was different, though. Like you took the fight to the alt.rock crowd.**
When we went in to make *Slang*, we just knew for our own sake we couldn't make another *Adrenalize*, or even another *Hysteria*. We'd done the trilogy of huge production albums, we needed to cleanse ourselves and do something different. So we lost all the big, mad harmony stuff, just made it sound like it does when we bang it out live in the rehearsal room. We jokingly called the album Commercial Suicide when we were writing it. We were cleansing our souls musically, but at the same time we'd been put into this great position of having something else to write about. For the first time in our lives, collectively, we were going through birth, death, marriage, divorce. All these kinds of things that all grown-ups have to deal with at different times.

I know it's a polarising record. I've got friends that say it's the best thing we've ever done, and I know there's people out there that think it's the worst thing we've ever done. And then there's other people that are just indifferent to it – "Er, doesn't really sound like Def Leppard." Well, that was the point. If we'd made *Adrenalize* again we'd have been torn to shreds, so we might as well make a record that we really, really, really wanna make. We knew we'd been shunted to one side but we knew we would bounce back. We just had to bide our time, because we knew we weren't going away.

The pendulum swung back again with *Euphoria* in 1999 – an intriguing return to 'classic' Leppard. Why?
The music landscape was once again changing. I can see from an outsider's point of view: "Oh, they gave it a go with *Slang*

Tripping the light fantastic: Def Leppard delivering the goods in late 2015.

and now they've gone back to tried and trusted." But we were just listening to what was going on, on the radio, we're reading stuff, we're picking the vibes up that everything seems to be going back to melody again, melody is not unfashionable any more. But it didn't have any balls, any power. We figured like, we've got both. And we know how to do it.

So when we came to *Euphoria* we just let ourselves go in any way we wanted, we didn't restrict ourselves. With *Slang* we did, we said we're not gonna do the typical Def Leppard things. But with *Euphoria* we didn't rule them out. If one came, we embraced it. Because it had been eight years since *Adrenalize*. That's a long time to have abandoned your main style of music. So we embraced it.

Euphoria also saw the return of Mutt, albeit only briefly.

We were really happy with what was going on, and Mutt came back into the cycle. I don't know how or why. Just, Mutt wants to come over. Okay, great. He wasn't going to produce the record. He was just out of the studio when we were in the studio. So he came over, and Phil had got this idea for a song that was along the lines of a *Photograph*-type thing, which was *Promises*. The way that song developed from the way that we were developing it to Mutt coming in, it was like the old team back together again.

What was it like working with Mutt again in the studio?

Weird. It was a bit weird because he wasn't working the same way. He wasn't hands-on. He was more observant. He'd say: "Stop", and make a suggestion. It was weird for Vivian [Campbell, Clark's replacement], because it was the first time Vivian had ever worked with him, so for him it was a learning curve. We also wrote another song where we did kind of start from scratch. We said let's do something really off the wall. That ended up being the song *All Night* – all groovy noises and orgasmic sounds. It's fucking nuts.

And you've continued along that path, with your most recent albums all arriving as singular entities. Some instantly recognisable material, some more surprising. You seem to have found a great balance, especially on *X*, which was voted *Classic Rock's* album of the year in 2002, and *Songs From The Sparkle Lounge* in 2008, and of course *Def Leppard* in 2015, which was a seamless, immersive experience – pop, rock, you name it.

"*Adrenalize* wasn't as adventurous as *Hysteria*. It was more of a rock album, less experimental."

Deliberately so. Because that's just where we were at. We've reached a point where we don't actually have to make new albums any more. We do it because we want to. Our management is like, look, if you want to go and record and pay for it yourselves, then fine, knock yourselves out. So we do, and we treat it as we always have, going in just trying to make something the best we can. Except there's no pressure from record company people to finish it. No A&R people asking if we've written any hits. We don't do what we're told. We do what we feel. We'll live and die by our own decisions. That is the ultimate satisfaction of being an artist.

Is that how *Yeah!* came about? It was probably your least successful album commercially, but what fun hearing you do things such as Bowie's *Drive-in Saturday*.

It's the perfect Def Leppard song. A friend of mine who used to do backing vocals for David told me: "I sent David your version of the song and he loves it!" I'm like: "Fuck off!" He said it was one of the best versions of one of his songs he'd ever heard. I played [Leppard's version of Free's] *A Little Bit Of Love* to Paul Rodgers when Queen played Dublin, and he was raving about it. I had a really great conversation with [Spiders From Mars bassist] Trevor Boulder. I said: "You remember when you were doing *The Jean Genie*?" He said: "No. We did it in an hour and a half. The only thing I remember about *The Jean Genie* was we were standing at the bottom of the stairs at Wessex studios and the Faces walked past us going up the stairs. That's it" [laughs].

Oreiunt autem rersp eles pra quostrum, con per um...

"WE'LL MAKE IT, I SWEAR..."

Exhaustion. Stress. A failed second album. 1986 was make or break time for **Bon Jovi**. This is the truth behind the making of 80s rock classic, **Slippery When Wet**.

WORDS: **MALCOLM DOME** PICTURES: **ROSS HALFIN**

It's 1986, and a Mexican restaurant called Break For The Border in Central London is the location for a celebration. It's time for Bon Jovi to get due credit from their record label, Mercury, for the fact that third album *Slippery When Wet* has turned them into household names. After the first of multiple sold-out nights at the Hammersmith Odeon – now the Apollo – the assembled media, hangers-on, musicians and general glitterati of the English rock scene have been crammed around snaking tables, drinking margaritas and downing tequila shots. No expense has been spared.

Suddenly, the creaking PA system is cranked and the familiar strains of *You Give Love A Bad Name* blare out, as the band arrive, surrounded by label types and security. From the midst of this pushing, shoving, self-important crowd, Jon Bon Jovi lifts a hand, clenches it into a fist, and waves it triumphantly at the journalists who'd supported the band from the beginning.

"We did it!" he shouts, unable to stop the tidal momentum that takes him ever closer to the VIP area, from which all save for a chosen élite would be excluded for the rest of the night.

Right then and there, you feel that the 'we' isn't merely a reference to Jon, the band or the label. But to everyone who'd believed for so long. Bon Jovi had made it into the big time, and things would never be the same again. It had all been so different just a few months earlier, when I jetted out to New Jersey, to listen to what would be the *Slippery When Wet* album, and find out how close Jovi were, this time, to the breakthrough many had predicted for a couple of years.

The band were under pressure. After their self-titled, debut album in 1984 had put them firmly into the trench, everyone took it for granted that 1985's *7800° Fahrenheit* would take the guys over the top, and into the vanguard of platinum-selling bands. It never happened.

"Everything about that second album was wrong," recalled Jon, as we sat in a rented apartment, facing the ocean in New Jersey. "All of us were going through tough times on a personal level. And the strain told on the music we produced. It wasn't a pleasant experience. I also reckon we went for the wrong producer. Lance Quinn wasn't the man for us, and that added to the feeling that we were going about it badly. None of us want to live in that mental state ever again. We've put the record behind us, and moved on."

But, the darkness and heavy emotional baggage of the band's second album had left them scarred. You could tell immediately in the room where the five members were huddled, cracking open a beer or several, munching on anything to hand, and generally trying to give off the atmosphere of confidence and belief, which they wanted to portray to the outside world. Jon was noticeably fidgety. Guitarist Richie Sambora was pacing the floor, as if measuring it for carpet tiles. Bassist Alec John Such was almost hiding in a corner, while drummer Tico Torres thrummed his fingers and keyboard player David Bryan kept himself occupied by idly glancing at the local sports pages. This was the first interview the band had done since finishing the new album, and there was a sense of nervous tension.

"We can't play you anything yet from the record," Jon stared and stated. "It's just not quite ready, and we're anxious for you to get a feel for the final mix, rather than hearing work in progress. But, we're all very happy with the way it's gone this time."

Behind those words was a man with his fingers crossed. He and the band – together with producer Bruce Fairbairn – felt within themselves that here was the best album they'd made. But the acid test was about to drip, drip, drip. Would the outside world agree?

There were questions that had to be faced: is it true that Bon Jovi were close to being dropped by their label, before they even made a third album? ➤

Oreiunt autem rersp eles pra quostrum, con per um...

"People seem to think I'm a pretty boy who just got lucky."

"You gradually get used to turning the label to working to your advantage."

"WERE WE NEARLY DROPPED BY OUR RECORD LABEL? THAT'S SOMETHING YOU'D HAVE TO ASK OUR MANAGERS"

JON BON JOVI

Why bring in outside writer Desmond Child? Were the band thinking about getting rid of their rhythm section? All these demanded answers. The only way to get the freedom to turn this into an interview with purpose was to leave the band behind and brace the wind whipping up over the beach. Jon and I sat down on the shale, alone save for a few curious seagulls in the distance, and what followed was an honest, illuminating dialogue on the state of Jovi.

"Were we nearly dropped by the record company?" repeated the bemused frontman, when confronted with the rumour. "Not as far as I know. That's something you'd have to ask our managers – Doc McGhee and Doug Thaler – they deal with all the business angles. We've had nothing but support from Polygram [their label, now known as Mercury] on this record. They're very keen to give it a real push. Of course, you're always under pressure to deliver the best possible album, but they wanna see us sell a million.

"What we've been trying to do is to balance out the need to sell a lot of copies with the desire to stick to our artistic guns. But it's what you expect when you sign up for a big company. They're not a charity. It's all a learning process. Every day we find out something new. I remember when we did our first video, for the song *Runaway*. We were in a big office at the label, and one of the business guys said, 'The great thing is that this video's recoupable'. I had no clue what the hell he was talking about, and just thought, 'Wow. That must be good'. Only later did I find out that it meant this cost us money.

"So, you gradually get used to turning the label to working to your advantage. We're still learning about this. But we've got what we wanted on this record, and I can't really believe that would have happened if they wanted rid of the band."

But what would be the consequence of this album not selling?

"Hey, there are jobs going in the local pizza parlours! Or maybe I can come over to England and make coffee for all you guys!"

Jon's chuckle was genuine. He'd always believed in himself, and in his destiny to become a 'rock star'. But he also wanted to earn respect as a musician too.

"My heroes are people like Southside Johnny and Bruce Springsteen. Their songs tell valuable stories. These guys are for real. I can relate to them, and the way they work. I come from the same blue-collar background. I've grafted for everything. People seem to think that I'm a pretty boy who just got lucky. I've swept studio floors, done all that kinda thing."

Which brings us to the fact that Jovi worked on this album with Desmond Child. The notion of bringing in an outside songwriter was the sort of thing done by pop artists, not credible rockers. Surely, this wasn't the band's idea?

"To some extent it was our choice. I liked what Bryan Adams had done with Tina Turner [they duetted on Adams's It's Only Love], so I suggested we do something similar – I write a song for someone like her, and then we do the song together. But that got changed, and our A&R guy [Derek Shulman] came up with Desmond's name.

"We're growing as songwriters, learning things. What's wrong with collaborating with people like him, who can help to give us the extra 10 per cent out of a song? Actually, he's involved with only three tracks on here – Livin' On A Prayer, You Give Love A Bad Name and Without Love – and, in each case, he hasn't tried to change what we are, but to refine it slightly, to suggest extra ways that we

"My heroes are people like Southside Johnny and Bruce Springsteen."

SLIPPERY THE COVER

When you consider that the band were originally gonna call the record *Wanted Dead Or Alive*, it's a long jump to the album cover we now know and love. What happened? Guitarist Richie Sambora explains.

"We like to hang out wherever we are, and Vancouver has these amazing strip bars. They have shower booths, where the girls strip, and literally lather up with soap. Now, that's cool! Very rock'n'roll, eh? So, we thought it would be great to call the album *Slippery When Wet*, in celebration of the girls who kept us entertained at these places, while we recorded the album."

That wasn't the end of the story. Jovi initially planned to put the album with a sleeve showing a well-endowed young lady wearing a skimpy, fashionably slashed T-shirt, bearing the record's title (above). Inevitably, some saw this as being just a little too risqué, and pressure was put upon the band to change the design.

"Our label freaked out a bit when they saw what we'd done!" laughed Sambora in 1987, as the band prepared to headline the Monsters Of Rock. "They thought it would be banned by American stores, so we had to come up with something else – fast!"

As this was right on the deadline, Jovi had to go with a very hastily concocted sleeve, the one used to this very day, which is...

"It's a black bin liner sprayed with droplets of water! That's it," Sambora revealed. "So simple, and not very impressive, but it got us out of a hole. The interesting thing was that the Japanese label were happy with the first idea, and decided to release the album with that sleeve. Wish everyone had gone for it as well."

could wring a bit more out of what we had.

"This is the way I see it: you don't think that George Martin had an input into what Lennon and McCartney wrote? You don't think Andrew Oldham helped out Jagger and Richards with a little guidance? However good you may think you are, it can't be a bad thing to work with professionals; those whose experience can bring out the best in you. Working with Desmond has done myself and Richie a power of good. I see him as almost an extra producer, someone we could bounce ideas off. But, once you hear these songs, you'll know that it's Bon Jovi, not Desmond Jovi."

Bon Jovi were far removed from rock star grandeur when they began the process of putting together their third album. Songwriters Richie and Jon weren't holed up in a mansion with hot and cold running indulgence. Oh, no…

"We wrote it in Richie's mother's basement. That's where we were at. His parents both worked, so the house was empty during the day. Richie was playing the bars on the cover circuit, trying to make ends meet – you see, we'd barely made any money at that point. I would drive over there with some pizza, bang on the door, and wake him up at one in the afternoon. We'd write until six in the evening, when his folks came home. It was just us. We knew who we were. We knew it was going to be a different producer who would capture that live element. And we were going to have stories to tell."

The story that fired the seminal *Wanted Dead Or Alive* went back to the band's exhaustive tour in support of the *7800° Fahrenheit* album.

"I was on the tour bus and couldn't sleep, and was staring out of the window, thinking: 'This is great, but it's an odd existence.' You don't know were you are. You're living in truck stops, sleeping on the bus, showering at a gig. We were thinking of songs like *Turn The Page* by Bob Seger, and how those songs were storytellers doing their best storytelling. I talked to Richie about the concept, he worked up the riff almost on the spot, and we knocked it out in two or three hours."

"We wrote it in Richie's mother's basement."

Livin' On A Prayer, meanwhile, is locked into the working class ethic around which Jon grew up.

"I am really proud of that one, because it goes back to the storytelling roots that I was talking about. It deals with the way that two kids – Tommy and Gina – face life's struggles, and how their love and ambitions get them through the ➤

"I wanted to tell their stories, because they could've been me."

Oreiunt autem rersp eles pra quostrum, con per um...

ON THE ROAD

Bon Jovi were on the road in America before *Slippery When Wet* was released, touring with Judas Priest and the Scorpions. Then, as the record was released, they began a tour opening for southern rockers .38 Special.

"Why did we decide to go out as a support band with them? We just didn't want to take a risk," Jon said in August 1987. "Sure we believed in the album, and thought that it would be successful, but there wasn't any proof that it would sell. As it turned out, things exploded for us soon after the tour started.

"We were in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, when we found out that the album made No.1 in America. Doc McGhee [manager] came out to celebrate, but missed his flight, so he chartered a private plane. When he came with that plane, we left the bus and all squeezed on. It was elbow to elbow, but we were on our own plane, man! Bon Jovi were selling a million records a month and it was phenomenal. .38 Special's manager said, 'Maybe we'll let you be coheadliners'. We went, 'Great. Gotta go now. It's our time'."

By the time Bon Jovi headlined the Monsters Of Rock Festival at Donington in August, 1987, they'd been on the road for a year – without a break. The strain was starting to tell on Jon. He looked a little less bright-eyed when compared to the man who'd celebrated at Break For The Border several months earlier. Not that he cared...

"So, I'm tired. Big deal! This is what I've lived for, and dreamt of for so long. If people still wanna see this band... hey, why should we stop?"

bad times. It's working class, and it's real. That's what most of our fans can relate to, not the limos and groupies. That's where I still find my heart.

"I wanted to incorporate the movie element, and tell a story about people I knew. So, instead of doing what I did on *Runaway*, where the girl didn't have a name, I gave them names, which gave them identity. I wanted to relate those stories to people I'd gone to high school with. Some got married right out of high school. Some joined the service, and now were working somewhere. I wanted to tell their stories, because they could've been me, if I hadn't learned to play guitar. Tommy and Gina aren't two specific people – they represent a lifestyle.

"As a songwriter I've been hugely influenced by someone like Tom Waits, thanks to his cinematic approach. Elvis Costello was another, and storytellers like Paul Simon. Elton John was a big influence when I was a kid, because of *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* and *Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy*."

The third crucial commercial element of the record was *You Give Love A Bad Name*, the second song written with Desmond Child.

"He came down to that Sambora basement, and we wrote something called *Edge Of A Broken Heart*," Jon recalled in the early 1990s. That song never made it on to *Slippery*..., but it went on to be a b-side and is featured on the 2004 retrospective box set *100,000,000 Bon Jovi Fans Can't Be Wrong*.

"The second song was *You Give Love A Bad Name*. We demoed it up, liked what we heard, but never thought it would be a hit. We'd never had one of those before, so didn't actually know what to expect.

"Actually, we were gonna call it *Shot Through The Heart* [the opening lyric], but then changed our minds."

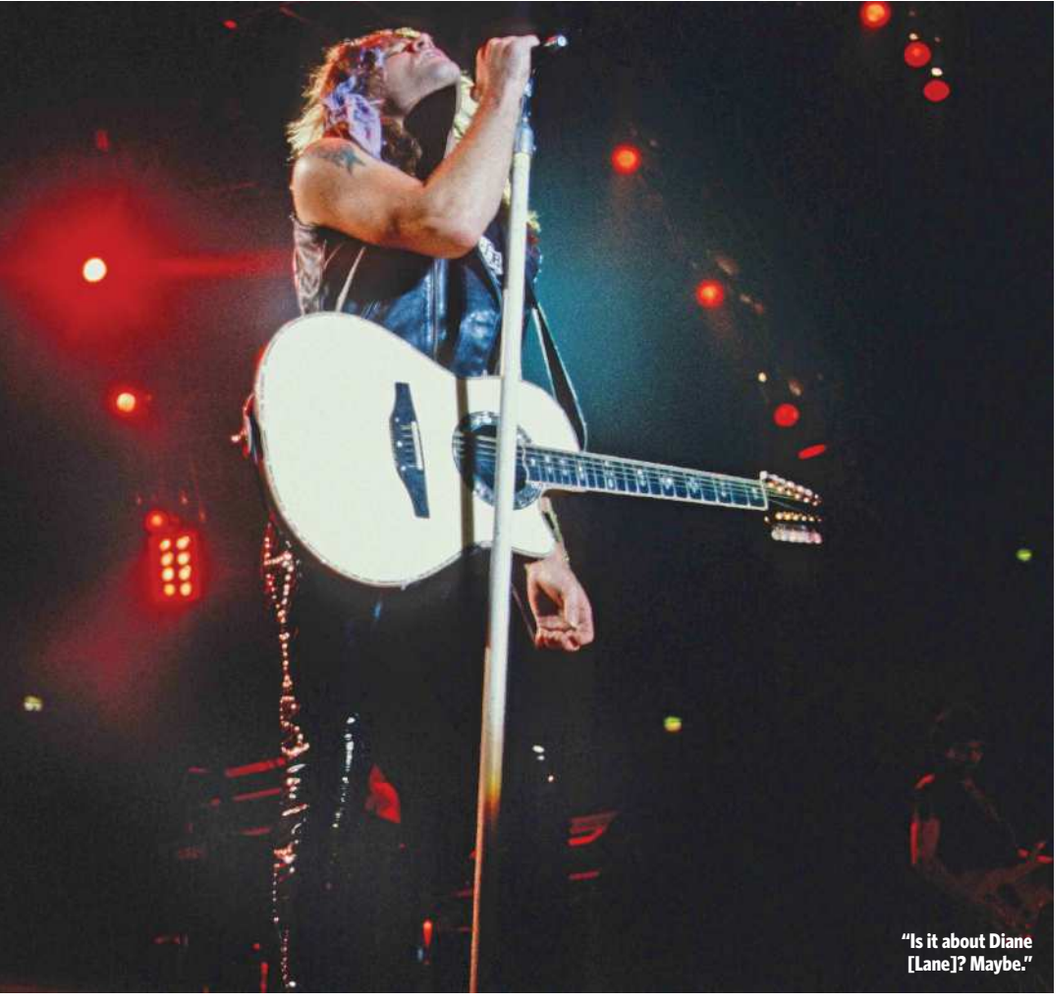
And considering the band already had a track with that very title on their debut album, it was a smart move. The song's believed to have been inspired by Jon Bon Jovi's brief flirtation with actress Diane Lane in 1985. But, a year later, the singer chose to remain enigmatic about the source, stating simply: "Is it about Diane? Maybe."

There was little glitz about the process that shaped one of the most important albums of the era. More a lot of guts, grit and grease. Oh, and a spontaneous vox pop, conducted in a pizza parlour. Back we go to the New Jersey beach in '86.

"Bon Jovi is still very much a grassroots band, OK? After we wrote all the songs for the album, we put them on a cassette and went down to the local pizza place [in Sayreville, New Jersey], hung out with the kids and got their opinions. The reaction was phenomenal. Honestly, the fans were excited by what we were doing – and these are the people

"WHEN YOU HEAR WHAT WE'VE DONE WITH THIS ALBUM, THEN YOU'LL UNDERSTAND JUST WHY I KNOW WE'RE GOING TO BE A BIG NAME FOR THE REST OF THE DECADE"

JON BON JOVI IN '86



"Is it about Diane [Lane]? Maybe."

who will finally judge, by either buying the album, or not."

The gathering force from the ocean spray was being more than matched by Jon warming to his subject. The pressures that seemed prevalent in the apartment just a couple of hundred metres in the distance were being washed away by his fervour. When it came to the state of the band, and whether changes were considered, he let fly…

"I know that some people think we should all be pretty boys, and that the image should come first. But do you know how long it took to find the right lineup? It didn't happen with the snap of a finger. We worked hard at it. We've lived together, toured together, been through the shit together. Why on earth would I even consider kicking out one or two members? Everyone does his job – we're a gang. The five of us."

With hindsight, I do wonder whether Jon was being completely honest. There seems to have been a deep-seated assessment of the band at all levels, prior to the *Slippery When Wet* sessions. Almost certainly, it involved an analysis – at least at label level – of whether this 'project' could go any further. This notion was backed up a few years later by the man who'd signed Bon Jovi in the first place, aforementioned Englishman Derek Shulman.

"I never doubted that Jovi would be huge," said Derek. "But, if you wanna know how close we came here to canning the whole thing before *Slippery When Wet*… all I'll say is that we didn't commit big funds to it without making sure everything was right. I think you can take it as read that, once we'd satisfied ourselves that the band were doing everything right, then we knew this was gonna be a winner."

Back on the beach, Jon had similar confidence. "When you hear what we've done, then you'll understand just why I know we're going to be a big name for the rest of the decade. Things just feel right. On our debut, we were learning how to be a band. With *7800° Fahrenheit*, we went through bad times, but they made us stronger. Now, we're putting it all together. I have to give a lot of credit to our producer this time, Bruce Fairbairn. He's just been the best we've worked with so far."

Jon's cousin, Tony Bongiovi, was the man primarily responsible for the debut, while Lance Quinn did the follow-up. However, Fairbairn was the man with whom Jon and the band felt most closely allied.

"We all moved to a two-bedroom apartment in Vancouver for pre-production," Jon told me. "We quickly realised that Bruce was going to capture the essence of the band live. He was unbelievably anal in his attention to detail. But he gave us this purpose. He believed in us. And the recording sessions went so fast."

It's probably true to say that Fairbairn is the most attuned producer with whom Jovi have ever worked. A couple of years after *Slippery*'s release, Fairbairn recalled how proud he was of the album.

"I've been lucky enough to work with so many different talents, but Bon Jovi may be the finest," he said. "You never quite know what to expect with a band whom you don't know – and there was record company pressure to deliver the hits – but they were a joy. People seem to concentrate so much on their success that they lose sight of how good these guys are."

Over the years, it's been forgotten how diverse this record is – not so much a pop-rock masterpiece as a hard rock masterclass. "We've got a few real surprises here," Jon remarked, huddling up against the prevailing chill on that beach in '86. "There's a song called *Love Is A Social Disease* that Aerosmith were keen to get hold of. It would be ideal for them, but they're not having it. Because it's even better for us!"

The original title of the band's third album was ➤

THE QUEST FOR CRED

Jon Bon Jovi – poet or pin-up? Pretty boy frontman, or credible singer-songwriter? Where do you stand? Jon himself has no doubts as to where he'd rather be seen – and it isn't on a poster on someone's wall.

"Let me put this into perspective. When you start out, you'll do almost anything to get noticed," he said back when his first solo album, *Blaze Of Glory*, was about to be released in 1990.

"Whatever gets you attention – that's what you do. I was no different. I desperately wanted to be noticed, I wanted to give my band an edge. So, we went for the image thing. It worked. But then the problem started. Because nobody would look beneath the image, and see that we were a good band, one who could hold our own with anyone.

"I remember reading about how The Beatles stopped playing live, because everyone just screamed through all of their shows. Musicianship and song quality meant so little to the fans that the band just felt undervalued. You know what, I understand what they mean. It got so bad when we toured for *Slippery When Wet* that there were times I was freaking out.

"Did we enjoy what the success brought us? Of course, we indulged in everything that was on offer. But it wasn't real, and what I wanted above all else was to be given credit for the work I put into the songs and into the recording of *Slippery*...

"Listen to that album. It isn't a sugary pop record. It has got depth. It has got emotion. It's about life, OK? It's about what happens to normal people. Not celebrities.

"For me the problem was that I didn't notice how the image overtook what we were about. Bon Jovi grew up on the streets, we worked hard. But to a lot of people, *Slippery When Wet* was our first album.

"We came ready packaged, with nice videos and a comfortable image. That was great. Recognition is never a bad thing. Now I'm working hard at getting people to forget about what they thought we were. But I cut my hair, and what happens? That became a more important issue than the songs!

"I guess I'm stuck with it All I can hope is that, gradually, Jon Bon Jovi will start to get acknowledged for his songs, not for his haircut."

At the end of last year, after having released seven studio records with Bon Jovi (and two solo albums) since *Slippery When Wet* first hit the shelves, and having appeared as a featured actor in movies and hit television shows such as *The West Wing*, *Sex And The City*, *Ally McBeal* and *Las Vegas*, Jon gave a 21st Century perspective on his stature...

"When I was first playing in Jersey bars I thought that was fame," he said. "And then, when we got a record deal I thought that was fame. When we had success with *Slippery When Wet*, I thought that was what fame really was all about. So it just gets bigger; you're playing stadiums and making movies, and then you're a guest at the White House. At this point? I don't even consider myself famous."

"We appreciate [fans] and have never ignored what they want to hear."

"I DID FEEL UNDER PRESSURE. WE WERE GETTING A LOT OF HASSLE TO MAKE THE PERFECT THIRD ALBUM. IT HAD TO SELL OR THE BAND'S CAREER WOULD STALL"

JON BON JOVI

to be *Wanted Dead Or Alive*, something they changed only shortly before the album's release in 1986 . And, as soon as the record was put out, it hit pay dirt – big time. It reached the top of the US chart, and peaked at No.6 in the UK, fuelled by the success of the first single, *You Give Love A Bad Name*. Suddenly, everyone wanted to know Bon Jovi. The tabloids were enamoured of Jon's good looks, and the spotlight was turned more on the superficial side of the band than anything deep or meaningful.

"Now, I'm starting to understand just why people have their heads turned by success," Jon laughed in early 1987, when we made further contact about it.

"It's been crazy. There is no privacy any more. The attention's amazing, but we're no longer able to get peace anywhere. I can now understand what Robert Plant meant when he said that you spend so much of your career trying to get noticed, and then once you make it, then you appreciate that it's the last thing you want."

Jon was also a little more open about some of the problems that the band had faced while making the record.

"I may not have said so to you last year, but I did feel under pressure. We were getting a lot of hassle from everyone around us to make the perfect third album. We kept being told that it had to sell, or the band's career would stall. What kept us going throughout was the belief that we'd done it the right way. We hadn't come out of nowhere and had a hit single. We'd built this carefully. Especially in Britain. We're known as a hard rock band with a strong and loyal fan base. So, even if this all blows up in our face tomorrow, those people who were there for us when we toured with Kiss in '84, and played Donington the next year, will still be there, because we appreciate them, and have never ignored what they wanna hear."

20 years on, *Slippery When Wet* has become iconic, selling over 13 million copies worldwide to date. It seems to be the standard by which everything the band have subsequently released is judged. In many ways, it's the point at which America took on board the lessons Def Leppard had taught in 1983 with *Pyromania*. *Slippery*… took these rules and ran with them. And the world noticed. Not just hard rock afficionados, but casual radio listeners and pop fans. But *Slippery* has survived and prospered because it is a record with depth, clarity and no little sincerity.

"I look upon it as a career record," Jon said in the mid-90s. "To me it was part of the ongoing story. I want to be around as long as someone like Frank Sinatra. He's my role model. I'd love to be half as cool as he was, to be on the scene for half the length of time. That guy's done nearly 70 movies, toured until he was 80. In those terms, *Slippery When Wet* was one more step on the road…but it was an important one.

"I rarely listen to our old records. But I heard *You Give Love a Bad Name* on the radio the other night. I was like, 'It's still on the radio, all these years later!' I saw myself again as a kid, enjoying that moment in time, and you smile. It still holds up."

"I saw myself again as a kid, enjoying that moment in time, and you smile. It still holds up."

PRE-SLIPPERY JOVI

Bon Jovi's steady rise began in 1984 with their self-titled debut. It sold over half-a-million copies in America, and got them considerable attention in Britain. That record has stood up well to the rigours of time, with songs like *Runaway*, *Roulette* and *Shot Through The Heart* still fondly regarded to this day by fans. Interestingly, keyboard player David Bryan went under his real name of David Rushbaum on this record, before electing to go for a more Anglicized approach.

What the *Bon Jovi* album did for the band was give them a foothold. Never spectacular, it's almost a compilation. Some of the recordings dated from the early part of the decade – *Runaway* and *She Don't Know Me*, for instance – the latter featuring Hugh McDonald on bass (he would re-enter the Jovi story two decades later), Aldo Nova on guitar and Chuck Burgi (of Rainbow fame) on drums. Runaway was from a four-track demo that had first got Jon noticed by local radio station WAPP-FM – while other tracks were of more recent vintage.

Although this made the record a little uneven, nonetheless it did the job, especially in the UK, where the interest in the band far outstripped that of America.

A year later, Bon Jovi got the chance to do an album – *7800° Fahrenheit* – from scratch with their settled line-up and producer Lance Quinn, who'd been briefly involved with some of the sessions for the first record. But, as previously underlined, the process was full of problems, not the least because all of the band were undergoing major personal tribulations. Sleeping on the floor of the studio – The Warehouse in Philadelphia – didn't appease their bad humour.

"We don't like playing anything from that era, because it reminds us of what a bad time we had back then," Jon insisted recently, when asked why, with the occasional exception of *In And Out Of Love*, nothing from this release is ever played live these days.

In reality, it's the ill-tempered nature of the record that makes it the most undervalued of the band's career. Listen again to tracks like *Silent Night*, *Tokyo Road*, *Only Lonely* and *Hardest Part Is The Night* – they've a timeless edge that gives the music an extra frisson.

7800° Fahrenheit – the temperature at which rock melts – deserves more respect than the band give it in the 21st century. Perhaps the songs were too surly for the time, which may explain why it struggled to match the sales success of its predecessor. But without it, *Slippery When Wet* would never have happened.

More importantly, both these records gave Bon Jovi a solid base with hard rock fans. It's a core following that's remained surprisingly loyal to the band, despite their subsequent megastardom.

THE MIND-BLOWING STORY OF ROCK'S GREATEST DECADE

From Queen and Pink Floyd to Aerosmith and Bowie, uncover the magic and madness of rock's defining decade. Packed with the best features from Classic Rock magazine, this is the ultimate celebration of the Seventies

ON SALE NOW

FUTURE

Ordering is easy. Go online at:
magazinesdirect.com
Or get it from selected supermarkets & newsagents

Skid Row

★YOUTH GONE WILD

Former Skid Row frontman Sebastian Bach on the anthem that propelled them into the big league back in 1989 and which remains their and his must-play signature song.

WORDS: RICHARD BIENSTOCK

Youth Gone Wild may not have been the biggest hit off Skid Row's self-titled debut album of 1989, but with its grab-you-by-the-throat riff, shouted, gang-style backing vocals and 'us against them' lyric the song quickly became, and remains, the band's defining anthem.

It also holds a special place in the heart of former Skid Row singer Sebastian Bach, as the song was largely responsible for his joining the band. In the mid-80s the singer, then going by his given name of Sebastian Bierk, was a lanky, poofy-haired teenager making a name for himself fronting Canadian metal bands such as Madam X and VO5. After one particular show with the latter in 1987, he found himself partying the night away with Mötley Crüe's Nikki Sixx and Tommy Lee, who had happened to be at the gig. "They loved me," Bach says of the Crüe pair, "because I was the guy with all the blow."

And so began a chain of events that would severely impact the singer's life.

"I gave Nikki a cassette with some of my stuff and a photo, and he passed it on to [Mötley Crüe manager] Doc McGhee," Bach recalls. "Doc also managed Bon Jovi, and Jon had grown up with Snake [Skid Row guitarist Dave 'Snake' Sabo]. Then one day I get this tape in the mail at my place in Toronto, with some songs from a band from New Jersey."

Coincidentally, it turned out that this wasn't the first time Bach had come across the band on the tape. "A few months before, I had gone to the wedding of a photographer friend of mine," he says. "While I was there I met Jon Bon Jovi's parents, and they started telling me about this new band from Jersey. When I got the tape in the mail, I realised it was the same guys."

Despite the distinguished cast of characters involved in connecting Bach to the still-unnamed New Jersey band, he wasn't exactly bowled over by what he heard. "The singer they had on there was a complete Bon Jovi clone," Bach recalls. "I listened to it once and then forgot about it for a couple of days." At the urging of a friend, he revisited the demo, and had a change of heart after playing one song in particular: *Youth Gone Wild*.

"It was those first two lines," Bach says: '*Since I was born they couldn't hold me down/ Another misfit kid another burned out town.*' I felt like it was speaking to my life. I knew I could deliver that song with power and conviction. All I had been looking for was good music that I could sing along to. And this was good music. *Youth*… was the song that led me to move to New Jersey."

Bach was in, and headed to New Jersey to begin rehearsing with Snake and the band: guitarist Scotti Hill, bassist Rachel Bolan and drummer Rob Affuso. One of the first songs they worked on was *Youth Gone Wild*, which had been written by Sabo and Bolan. From the outset, Bach made it very clear that, unlike the singer he had heard on the demo version, he was no Bon Jovi clone.

"I remember playing *Youth*… with the guys, and when we got to the middle part where we do the chorus with just drums and vocals, I sang the entire thing in one breath. And they all went: 'Holy shit, man!' They couldn't believe it."

With Bach at the helm the band, now named Skid Row, quickly secured a deal with *Atlantic Records* (though only Bach, Sabo and Bolan were actually signed to the label), and were packed off to Royal Recorders, a studio in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, to record their debut album.

"I think the label sent us out there to keep us out of trouble," says Bach. "We were all little kids at the time, though I was a littler kid than the others. But we knew we had to make a killer album. I remember one day while we were out there Scotti and I went to some amusement park. We were just walking around, and I said to him: 'Hey, man, do you think we'll ever go gold? Could you imagine that?' And he was like: 'I don't know, man. That'd be fucking crazy!'" Bach laughs. "Once the album came out I think that took about two weeks."

Skid Row took off practically upon its release in January 1989, thanks in no small part to *Youth Gone Wild*, which was issued as the album's first single. The song – and the accompanying video – announced the band as rock's newest bad boys, the seedy underside of the poppy, Winger/Warrant-style hard rock that had started to dominate the music landscape.

"We did that video in some big warehouse in Hollywood," Bach says. "I remember drinking a lot of whiskey during the shoot. That was back when we used to drink booze all day. That was also one of the first times that I didn't tease up my hair. I just let it go natural. Which was a big step for me [laughs]."

On the strength of two more singles – *18 and Life* and the power-ballad *I Remember You* – the *Skid Row* album went on to sell more than five million copies. The band became superstars, and no member more so than the still-under-21 Bach, who, with his pretty-boy good looks, banshee wail of a voice and penchant for wild behaviour, was *Youth Gone Wild* personified. During the tour for the album he was arrested after hurling a bottle from the stage and injuring a female member of the audience. A few months earlier he had made the news for wearing a T-shirt bearing the slogan: 'AIDS Kills Fags Dead'.

"It's the same as when Ozzy sings *Paranoid*, or David Lee Roth does *Runnin' With The Devil*. People love it."

In spite of, or perhaps in part due to, Bach's penchant for controversy, Skid Row's second album, 1991's *Slave To The Grind*, debuted at No.1 on the US chart. It would prove to be the band's peak, and after one more studio record, 1994's *Subhuman Race*, Skid Row parted ways with Bach, before calling it quits.

In the late 90s Sabo, Bolan and Hill re-formed Skid Row with a new singer, Johnny Solinger, and the band continues to record and tour.

Bach, for his part, launched a successful career as a Broadway and television actor, as well as a solo artist. He recently released his second solo album, *Angel Down*.

Though they now lead very separate careers, both Bach and Skid Row continue to perform *Youth Gone Wild* in concert, and the song remains a showstopper. "It's just a true anthem," Bach says. "It's the same as when Ozzy sings *Paranoid*, or David Lee Roth does *Runnin' With the Devil*. People love it. It doesn't matter if it's a club in New Jersey in 1988 or a stadium in Germany in 2007, when that song comes on, every person in the room becomes the *Youth Gone Wild*."

GETTY

SKINNING UP

Since his earliest days with Skid Row, Sebastian Bach has sported a large 'Youth Gone Wild' tattoo on his forearm. In what was a particularly ballsy move, the singer says he got the tattoo done not only before the song was a hit, but also before the band even had a record deal.

"I had it done when I first came down to New Jersey," says Bach. "We didn't have anything at the time, but I just loved the song so much, and even back then I knew what it meant."

There was also another, more sentimental reason for the tat. "My son, Paris, had just been born," says Bach. "And here I was, down in Jersey, while he was still up in Canada with his mom. I was gone, so in my eyes he was the Youth Gone Wild. It was a tribute to my kid."

NEIL ZLOZOWER

Skid Row: "*Youth*... was the song that led me to move to New Jersey," says Seb Bach.

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
January 24, 1989
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
US No.99
PERSONNEL
Sebastian Bach
Vocals
Dave 'Snake' Sabo
Guitar
Scotti Hill
Guitar
Rachel Bolan
Bass
Rob Affuso
Drums
PRODUCER
Michael Wagener
LABEL
Atlantic Records

GLORY DAYS

Lauded as 'rock'n'roll future' in 1974, maybe, but it was the next decade when major success hit for Bruce Springsteen. From *The River* to *Born In The USA* and beyond, the 1980s were a rollercoaster ride of epic highs and crushing lows.

Words: **Paul Rees**

On the warm evening of October 2, 1985, it was approaching midnight when Bruce Springsteen introduced his new wife to some 80,000 curious onlookers during his concert at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Stepping out from the wings, Julianne Phillips was a 25-year-old model and actress from a well-to-do Chicago family. She and Springsteen had met the previous October, and were married the following May during a short break from the 15-month-long tour to support his most recent and mind-bogglingly successful album, *Born In The USA*.

Springsteen took his wife of five months in his arms and danced with her to one of his songs under the harsh white stage lights. He had first danced to it not much more than a year ago with another aspiring young actress, Courtney Cox, in the video that launched *Born In The USA* into the stratosphere. Tonight, on this 156th and final date of the tour, as on every other night of it, *Dancing In The Dark* was the vehicle with which Springsteen and his seven-piece E Street Band drove their audience to a euphoric peak and then held them there for almost two hours more. And this in spite of the fact that its lyrics spoke of nothing so much as self-loathing. "Had to save the last dance for her," Springsteen told the roaring crowd as the climactic notes of the song reverberated around the vast stadium. He was smiling then, seeming to bask in the glory of it all.

And as well he might. *Born In The USA* had come along right on the heels of a dark period in both Springsteen's own life and for Americans in general. The years immediately preceding its release had seen the US economy slump, jobs vanish, and out there in the heartlands these were the worst times folks could recall since the days of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Springsteen, who was susceptible to his own depressions, had for his part sunk into an existential crisis following the tour to promote his fifth album, *The River*, and with which he had kicked off the new decade. He articulated as much on his next record, 1982's *Nebraska*, a stark, solemn collection of songs that he recorded apart from the E Street Band, who had been the bedrock of his music since the mid-70s.

Nebraska had sounded like whispered moans in the dead of night. The ordinary Joe characters with which Springsteen populated *Born In The USA* were often as not fighting the same internal and external battles as on its predecessor, but musically this was an altogether different and more welcoming beast. Filtered through the returning E Street Band, *Born In The USA* was instead rousing, uplifting, as slick and sleek-sounding as a sports car, and balm to tend the battered psyches of millions of Americans.

It arrived at precisely the right moment too, just as the country was returning to prosperity and entering into a new era of consumption and consumerism. Like Michael Jackson's *Thriller* before it, and Madonna's *Like A Virgin* and Prince's *Purple Rain* in that same year of 1984, *Born In The USA* proved to be a commercial juggernaut. It was mined for multiple hit singles, the videos that accompanied them given saturation coverage on the then three-year-old MTV. Together, Springsteen, Jackson, Madonna and Prince were rewriting the rules of pop superstardom, becoming brands in their own right. And it was through their aspirational promo videos that each of them reinforced their brand values – and where Springsteen stood apart. Whereas the others appeared aloof, like alien beings from some glamorous, far-off galaxy, Springsteen dressed in worn jeans and a T-shirt and sang about the trials of the working man. He conveyed nothing as much as down-home values and an old-fashioned belief in the redemptive power of rock'n'roll. Uniquely, Springsteen was embraced as a folk hero, not least by the country's then President, Ronald Reagan, who notably mistook *Born In The USA*'s barnstorming title track for a patriotic blessing of American values.

> **"I'd created an opportunity for myself, and why cross the desert and not climb the mountain?"**
>
> Bruce Springsteen

So there Springsteen was at the Coliseum, riding the crest of a wave and having ascended to become a true American icon. No wonder he looked in that instant as if he were about as content with the state of things as one could be. But not five years later he would end the decade, one that had brought him untold fame and wealth, consumed once more by black thoughts and self-doubt. His marriage would be wrecked, and he would have cut loose the E Street Band by then too. All of this could not have been telegraphed better than by one of the last songs he had written for *Born In The USA*, and with which he sent the Coliseum crowd rejoicing off into the LA night. *'Glory days,'* Springsteen sang to them, *"Well, they'll pass you by… in the wink of a young girl's eye…'* ≻

GETTY

Watching *The River* flow. But recording that album was no walk in the park.

PRESS

The strongest tie binding together Springsteen and the E Street Band was almost broken late on an earlier night in March 1979. At that time, Springsteen and his then six-piece backing group were just starting the recording of *The River* in the gymnasium-sized main room at the Power Station studio in downtown Manhattan. Springsteen had arrived intending to work fast and cut a high-octane, primal-sounding record that encapsulated the intensity of their live shows. "We figured we'd throw up the room mics," he told biographer Peter Ames Carlin, "and make a lot of rock'n'roll noise."

But things didn't quite work out that way. Springsteen was instead prevaricating over the most infinitesimal details, just as he had done during the making of their two previous records together, each of which he had extended into tortuous ordeals.

This particular evening he was likely fretting over the timbre of Max Weinberg's snare drum, or when precisely to have saxophonist Clarence Clemons come in on a certain track. Or any of the other infinite conundrums that buzzed through his mind whenever he was occupied with capturing his music on tape. Steve Van Zandt, the E Street Band's guitarist since 1975, had run out of patience with this maddening routine and snapped. "Listen," he said to Springsteen, seething with pent-up frustration, "I'm sorry, but I can't do this again. You carry on, but I quit."

The voluble Van Zandt was a veteran of the bar bands Springsteen had led along the New Jersey shore in the late 60s and early 70s and the nearest thing he had to a close friend. Losing him at this crucial juncture would be for Springsteen like cutting off his own right arm. And so he moved at once to placate Van Zandt, inviting him to produce the record alongside himself and Jon Landau, Springsteen's bookish manager. Van Zandt acceded, and Springsteen pressed on with a process that would ultimately drag on for 18 months at a final cost in excess of a million dollars. When he was eventually done, *The River* turned out to be a transformational double album, widening the scope of his music and paving the way to *Born In The USA*. Right then, though, Springsteen was at a crossroads. Approaching 30 and moved to contemplate the point he had reached in his personal life, he was deeply unsettled by what he found himself facing up to.

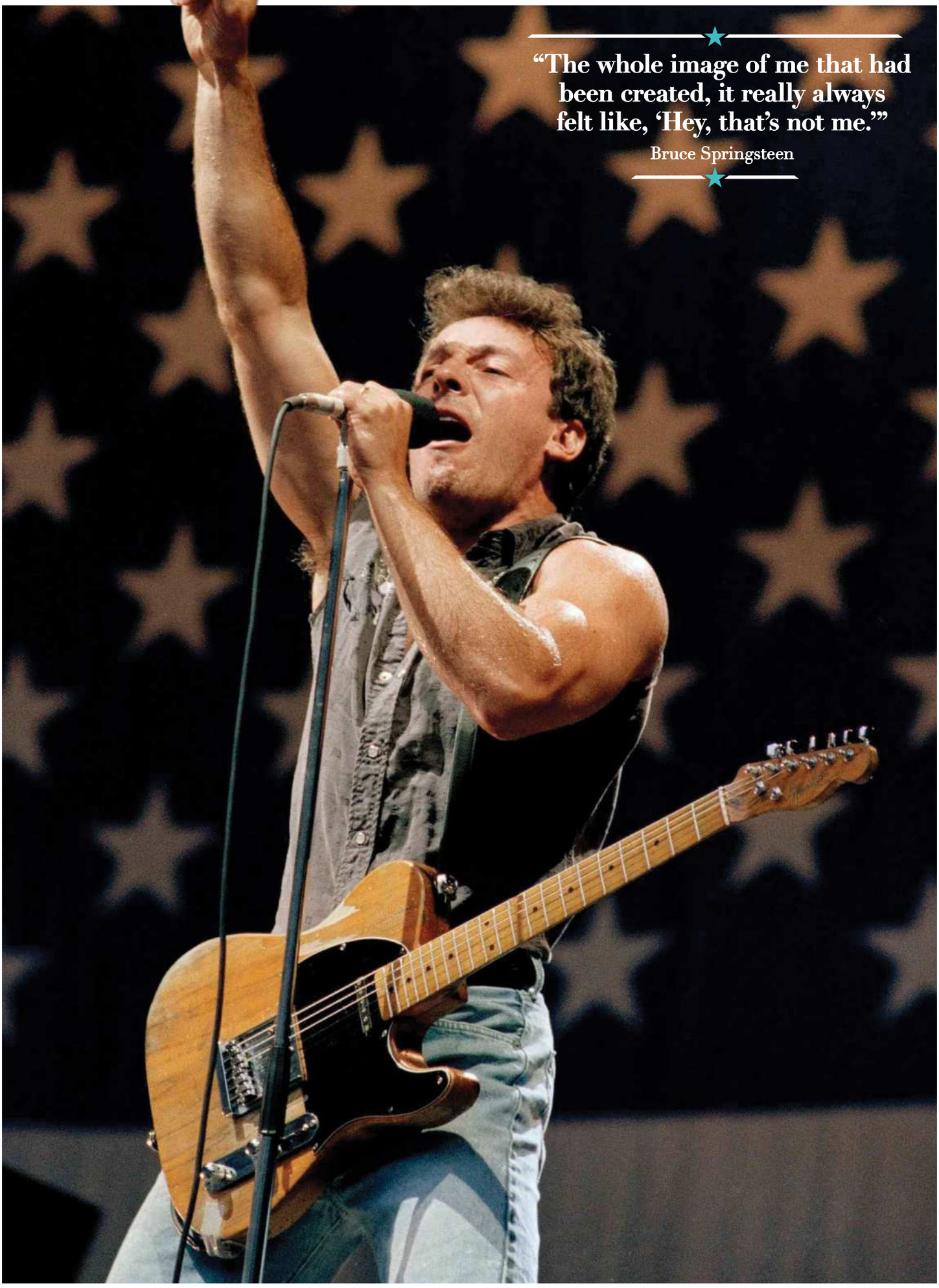
> "Music provided me with a means of communication."
>
> Bruce Springsteen

Raised in the blue-collar town of Freehold, New Jersey, Springsteen was the eldest of three children born to father Douglas, a World War Two veteran and sometime bus driver and prison guard, and mother Adele, a legal secretary. Their only son, he grew up something of a loner, often at odds with his buttoned-up father and almost everyone else he came into contact with. Music lit him up like nothing else. His first band was a bunch of high-school Beatles wannabes called The Castilles, whose drummer went off to fight in Vietnam and didn't come back. Springsteen skipped the draft, dropped out of college and passed through a bunch of other short-lived bands before striking out on his own. He was signed to Columbia Records in 1972 by John Hammond, and became the latest in a string of earnest young singer-songwriters to be touted as the 'new Dylan'. His first two albums for the label were overly intricate, verbose affairs and both flopped, but then he hit pay dirt with his third, in 1975.

On *Born To Run*, Springsteen was able to imagine what Roy Orbison might have sounded like fronting Phil Spector's Wall Of Sound. Propelled by its title track, it achieved platinum sales in the US. That feat was matched by its less grandiose, more downbeat follow-up, *Darkness On The Edge Of Town*. By then the E Street Band had also coalesced around Van Zandt, Clemons, Weinberg, bassist Garry Tallent, organist Danny Federici and pianist Roy Bittan.

The sales of those records, though, still paled next to those of such 70s behemoths as Led Zeppelin, the Eagles and Fleetwood Mac. And although he could pack out multiple nights at arenas on his native East Coast, elsewhere across the US his fan base was patchier, less frenzied. And apart from one ill-starred visit to London in 1975, he had not set foot outside his homeland. He was also, to all intents and purposes, broke. Work on *Darkness* had been held up for a year by the court case he had fought to free himself from his first manager, Mike Appel, and which had frozen his assets.

Returning from the *Darkness* tour at the start of 1979, Springsteen sequestered himself in a rambling farmhouse in the rural New Jersey township of Holmdel. He was dating an actress, Joyce Heyser, although she was living on the opposite coast. He preferred then to maintain a distance in all of his personal relationships. However, as he began sketching out his latest ➢



"The whole image of me that had been created, it really always felt like, 'Hey, that's not me.'"

Bruce Springsteen

REX FEATURES

Bruce and the fellas on tour in 1980.

ALL GETTY

batch of songs in this isolated state, Springsteen also found himself considering the kind of life that he had to that point shunned: the notional idyll of settling down and raising a family, but having to do so against the backdrop of the ruinous recession blighting the US economy. The young, wide-eyed characters Springsteen had written about on *Born To Run* had been bent on escape from their confined, small-town existences. *Darkness* found them running headlong into dead-end jobs, shorn of hope and fighting a suffocating sense of dread and despair. Now he was looking inward for the answers to what might come next.

"I wanted to write for my age, you know?" he reflected in *The Ties That Bind*, the documentary film included in the recent box set re-release of *The River*. "By the time you're thirty you have a clock that's ticking – you're definitely operating in the adult world. Part of *The River* was my trying to find the courage to jump in with both feet and experience those things for myself."

Once Springsteen had thrown open this gateway, songs poured out. A bunch of them were reflective, uncertain pieces, such as *Point Blank*, *Stolen Car* and *Independence Day*, an imagined conversation with his father. These were counterbalanced by revved-up barroom rockers like *Two Hearts* and *Out In The Street*, songs through which he shrugged off the weight of the world. He ended up with 70 songs vying for inclusion on the record. He was of a mind to ditch one of these in particular, believing it to be too lightweight. In the event, both Van Zandt and Landau implored him to keep hold of *Hungry Heart*. It went on to be his first smash-hit single.

At one point Springsteen handed over a single 10-track disc, also titled *The Ties That Bind*, to Columbia, but then grabbed it back. He quickly concluded that it simply wasn't big enough to contain the ranging landscape of the music he was making. He had also written yet another new song that felt like it should be a centrepiece: introduced by weeping harmonica, *The River* was a mournful tale of two young lovers hollowed out to a husk by hard times. In essence it was the story of his sister, Ginny, who'd got pregnant at 18 and married her construction-worker boyfriend.

> "[*Nebraska* was about] that moment when time stops and everything goes to black."
>
> Bruce Springsteen

Unfolding over four sides of vinyl and comprised of 20 tracks, *The River* was finally released on November 17, 1980. It debuted at No.1 on the *Billboard* chart and within a year had sold two million copies in the US. Less than a fortnight before it came out, Ronald Reagan was elected the 39th President of the United States, and Springsteen's themes of struggle and of faith being tested resounded with the storms that were to go on assailing the country. Springsteen was now being perceived as a populist champion of America's dispossessed and downtrodden. In that sense, *The River* completed the trilogy begun with *Born To Run*. Yet in its reach and ambition, it also pushed him up and over that hill and on towards an ever bigger inclination.

Coming off the road after 11 months of touring *The River* through the States and also for the first time around the UK and mainland Europe, Springsteen holed up in a rented house out in the New Jersey farm belt. Others in the E Street Band were returning to new normalities: Clemons had got married in Hawaii that September, with Springsteen as his best man, and Weinberg and Van Zandt were recently hitched too. Van Zandt, the only band member Springsteen saw socially, was also off making his first solo album. By contrast, Springsteen had just broken up with Joyce Heyser, and was no closer to claiming the life he had imagined for himself on *The River* than when he started out on that record.

"I'd had more success than I'd ever thought I'd have, we'd played around the world, and I thought, like, 'Wow, is this it?'" Springsteen told James Henke of *Rolling Stone* in 1992. "Music provided me with a means of communication, a means of placing myself in a social context – which I have a tendency not to want to do. But the guy without the guitar was pretty much the same as he had been… Once out of the context of my work, I felt lost. I mean, I got really down, really bad for a while."

He found the way to expressing the bleak thoughts spooking him through the books and movies he was consuming. Among these was Terence Malick's

chilling 1973 film *Badlands*, which Springsteen happened across late one night on TV. The film recounted the true story of 19-year-old Charles Starkweather, who in December 1957 embarked on a two-month killing spree through Nebraska and Wyoming, which landed him in the electric chair. Settling down to write a new record, Springsteen also thought back to his paternal grandparents' house in nearby Freehold where he spent chunks of his childhood, and where in 1927 the couple had lost a daughter, hit by a truck on the road outside. "I was trying to capture the mood of what that house was like when I was a child," he recalled to Ames Carlin. "Austere, haunted [and] just the incredible inner turmoil."

In two months Springsteen pulled together a collection of songs joined up by their hushed tone and fatalistic mood. The characters that stalked them like spectral presences were made up of an underclass of the doomed and damned.

One morning he sent his guitar tech to the local electrical store to pick up an off-the-shelf Teac cassette recorder, and over the next two nights put down 15 songs on it. He recorded in his bedroom, perched on a wooden chair, its creaks audible on one track, *Highway Patrolman*. Each of the songs was acoustic, bare-boned and sung like a gallows hymn. The tape opened with the ghostly *Nebraska*, inspired by Malick's movie. A song near the end of it was a weary-sounding lament to the fate of a Vietnam vet who'd come home to a country that had turned its back on him, titled *Born In The USA*.

Springsteen wrote in his 1998 lyrics collection, *Songs*, that in total, these tracks marked out a line "between stability and that moment when time stops and everything goes to black. When the things which connect you to your world – your job, your family, friends, your faith, the love and grace in your heart – [they all] fail you."

In May 1982, Springsteen summoned the E Street Band, Landau and his trusted engineers, Toby Scott and Chuck Plotkin, back to the Power Station to begin working through the songs on the tape and others that were still then gestating. This latter batch included *I'm On Fire*, *Darlington County* and *Cover Me*, which Springsteen had meant to hand over to disco queen Donna Summer but that Landau once more entreated him to hang on to. Turned over to the band, these newer tracks at once burst into bloom. Those on the tape, though, stubbornly refused to yield to more resounding treatments. Whatever else the E Street Band brought to them, their versions lacked the fearful intimacy that made Springsteen's demos so compelling. There was one exception: *Born In The USA*. The second take of it that Springsteen cut with the band during the sessions exploded onto tape and wound up leading off the album of the same name. For now, though, he set it to one side. He was not ready just yet to make that kind of noise.

Rather, he kept the band hammering away at the other, less pliable songs on his cassette, growing more frustrated with each unsatisfactory attempt. Eventually Landau blurted out to him one night that they consider releasing the tape itself as Springsteen's next album. Springsteen bit, and instructed Scott to master the record from his home recordings. This proved to be yet another arduous exercise, since the cassette recorded had inadvertently been set to record at the wrong speed. Scott also had to painstakingly eradicate tape hiss. The whole process took months, but *Nebraska*, as Springsteen had decided to call the album, emerged from it a singular work – hushed and desolate, but powerful and evocative.

Wrapped in a stark black-and-white cover depicting a deserted two-lane road photographed through a car windscreen, *Nebraska* was released on September 30, 1982 to glowing reviews. It came out at the same time as such polished, easy-on-the-ear blockbusters as *Toto IV* and Roxy Music's *Avalon*, and just two months ahead of *Thriller*. It was also a time when the US was suffering double-digit unemployment. Narrating his own long, dark night of the soul, Springsteen also voiced the general gloom creeping out there in the country.

He did no interviews or touring to promote the record, and even elected not to appear in the first video he had commissioned for the nascent MTV. This was shot to back up *Nebraska*'s taster ➢

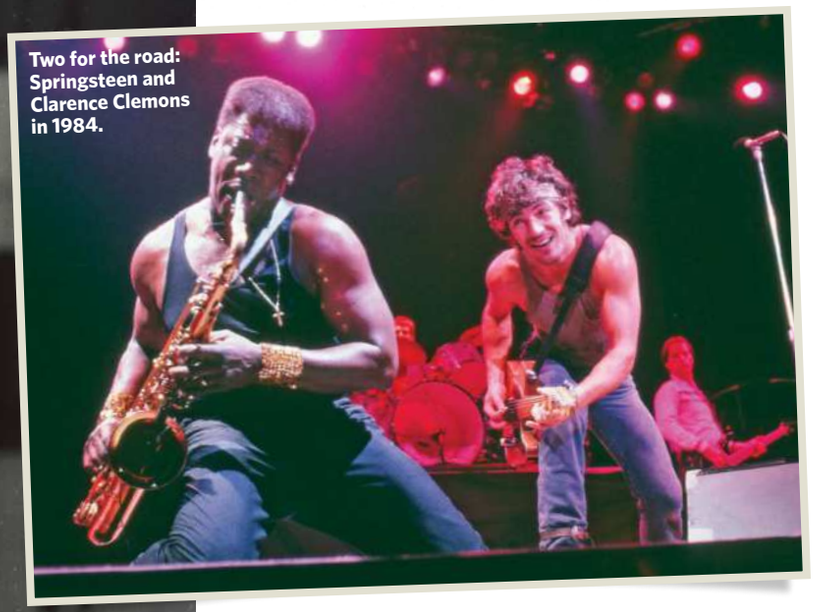
Posing for a portrait before performing at the Philadelphia Spectrum on September 19, 1984 on the *Born In The USA* tour.

"I'd had more success than I'd ever thought I'd have, and I thought, like, 'Wow, is this it?'"

Bruce Springsteen

Just a prisoner of rock'n'roll.

ALL GETTY



Two for the road: Springsteen and Clarence Clemons in 1984.

track, *Atlantic City*, no less subdued than the rest of the album but with a keening melody. It instead showcased images of the crumbling facades on the shoreline of New Jersey's one-time gambling mecca. About as far from Jackson moonwalking as it was possible to get, *Nebraska* was nonetheless another platinum hit.

Not that the success of the record brought Springsteen any immediate solace, since for the rest of that year his mood remained dark and unstinting. Flitting between LA, where he had bought his first house, just off Sunset Strip, where he'd installed a state-of-the-art home studio, and a second property he shelled out for in Rumson, New Jersey, he spent the next five months writing yet more songs in solitude. To start with, these were close relatives of the *Nebraska* material, songs that stared down the barrel of a gun, but gradually Springsteen found his way back into the light. He had started seeing a psychiatrist out in LA, and back east in New Jersey began attending a gym. Besides performing and having a passion for surfing, Springsteen claimed to have avoided all other forms of exercise up to this point, and indeed appeared to exist on a diet confined to junk food. Soon enough, though, he was eating healthily, running six miles a day and lifting weights, bulking up his wiry, malnourished-looking frame.

All in all, it was as if he were engaged in an act of rebuilding and remaking himself. And that he was doing so to prepare for the task of hauling himself and his music up to the next level and then onwards to the boundless horizon beyond it.

In September 1983, Springsteen again rounded up the E Street Band at the Power Station and another New York studio, the Hit Factory. The subsequent sessions were given impetus by a surging, R&B-flavoured rocker he had just written, although the upbeat musical backdrop to *Bobby Jean* was also concealing a hurt. Written as a bittersweet farewell to a lover, it was in fact aimed at least in part at Van Zandt, who had told Springsteen back in the spring that he meant to go off and have his own career. On this occasion Springsteen could not persuade him otherwise.

"All of a sudden I could tell [Springsteen] wasn't hearing me," Van Zandt related to Ames Carlin. "I wasn't getting through. That was new to me and I wasn't comfortable with it. I felt our relationship was in a little bit of jeopardy. And I thought the way to preserve the friendship was to leave."

In spite of his consiglieri's departure, Springsteen had recovered his bearings and over the next five months moulded the *Born In The USA* album into shape. The title track and another leftover from the original *Nebraska* tape, *Downbound Train*, were dusted down and put alongside songs dating from the May 1982 session, and a fresh burst of material that had yielded *Bobby Jean* and also the garage-rock outpouring of *No Surrender* and then *Glory Days*. By the following March, 15 completed songs were up for inclusion on the record, but Landau still felt they were missing a signature hit and told Springsteen as much. Springsteen barked back that he had written 60 new songs to that point, and if Landau believed he could do better then he could go and write his own fucking hit.

> **"I thought the best way to preserve the friendship was to leave."**
>
> Steve Van Zandt on his *Born In The USA*-era departure

That same night, back at the Manhattan hotel where he was staying temporarily, Springsteen took up his acoustic guitar and wrote *Dancing In The Dark* in the hours before dawn. He recorded it with the band the next evening, completing an album that was chock-full of songs as instant and accessible as *Hungry Heart*, the breakthrough hit he had meant to give up. He had no such reservations regarding *Born In The USA*. In fact, quite the opposite was true this time around. Having until then zealously guarded how his songs were sent out into the world, Springsteen was soon handing over *Dancing In The Dark* and *Cover Me* to New York hip-hop producer Arthur Baker to be remixed as dance tracks, following the example of labelmate Cyndi Lauper. The hits from Lauper's multi-platinum *She's So Unusual* album of the previous year had been successfully reupholstered for the clubbing crowd.

Friends and bandmates: Springsteen and Steve Van Zandt.

"In the end [with *Born In The USA*] it was a variety of things that kind of threw the argument in one direction," Springsteen told writer Dave Marsh. "But my feeling was that I'd created an opportunity for myself, and why cross the desert and not climb the mountain?"

In Annie Leibovitz's famous cover photograph for *Born In The USA*, the newly muscled Springsteen, turned to face a backdrop of the Stars and Stripes, is framed as the archetypal strong, indomitable American hero figure, cut from the same cloth as Gary Cooper's noble lawman in *High Noon* or Marlon Brando's proud

Two hearts: Springsteen and Patti Scialfa during an Wembley Stadium concert in 1988.

dock worker in *On The Waterfront*. The record itself was custom-built to come booming out of car radios and jukeboxes and, most of all, for the shiny new compact disc format. Buoyed by its video, shot by film director Brian de Palma, of *Carrie* and *Scarface* fame, on the opening night of the tour in St Paul, Minnesota on June 29, *Dancing In The Dark* rocketed up the *Billboard* Hot 100. The just-released album was pulled along in its slipstream, on its way to becoming a 30-million-selling colossus.

The *Dancing In The Dark* video presented Springsteen as an idealised version of his true self: sweat-drenched and in his natural environment, but larger-than-life now too, whisking the pretty girl from the audience and into a dream state. Out on the road he was packing out multiple nights in arenas across the States, but still able to assert his everyman credentials and keep a hold of things. In each stopover city on the tour he made donations from the nightly receipts to local food banks and Vietnam vets' organisations. Fronting a fleshed-out E Street Band that now included Van Zandt's replacement, Nils Lofgren – gnomish but extravagantly gifted, and whom Springsteen had also known since the early 70s – and flame-haired backing singer Patti Scialfa, a New Jersey native who had once auditioned for one of his bar bands, he kept right on conducting their epic shows in the spirit of revivalist meetings.

"All I saw when I was a kid was showmen," Springsteen told me in 2009. "The doo-wop guys, like Sam And Dave. Those people believed the show was a tool of total communication – going out and doing some clowning, some preaching, making the band so tight and knocking those songs into one another with such furious pace that the audience couldn't catch their breath. You left them exhausted and exhilarated."

Born In The USA, though, took on a momentum of its own and slipped out from his control. 1984 was an election year in the US, and at a campaign stop in Hammonton, New Jersey that September, the incumbent President Reagan tried to hitch himself to Springsteen's bandwagon. "America's future," Reagan announced, "rests in the message of hope in the songs of a man so many young Americans admire – New Jersey's own Bruce Springsteen."

Springsteen had largely avoided airing his political views up to that point, but it was obvious from even a cursory knowledge of his songs that he was in the opposite camp to the Republican Reagan. And he took exception to the president's endorsement. On stage at Pittsburgh's Civic Arena two nights later, Springsteen told his fans: "Well, the president was mentioning my name in a speech the other day and I kind of got to wondering what his favourite album of mine must've been, you know. I don't think he's been listening to this one."

He then played the coruscating *Nebraska* song *Johnny 99*, whose protagonist, worn down from losing his job at the local car plant, *'got a gun, shot a night clerk'* and begged to be put on Death Row.

> "Anybody that talented will need to spread their wings."
>
> Nils Lofgren

Yet it was all but impossible for him to rein in his hugely expanding audience, and for many of whom he was nothing but the latest pop star. When the tour headed to Australia, Japan and Europe the following spring, rabid demand for tickets forced him to move up into stadiums, breaking a vow he had made not to. Back in the US that summer, playing 28 stadium dates, Springsteen appeared on occasions frustrated, niggled by persistent whooping and hollering during his quieter songs and originating from the massed newcomers to his congregation. He was also struggling to make himself heard during his monologues, a long-held feature of his shows and the means by which he had got across whatever might be foremost on his mind.

Inevitably, great success also changed both Springsteen himself and the world he inhabited. By the time the tour rolled into LA, he was >

Before and after

Ten other transformational albums of the 80s.

1980: AC/DC *Back In Black* (Atlantic)
Released a scant five months after Bon Scott's death and with new singer Brian Johnson on board, hand-crafted by super-producer 'Mutt' Lange to smooth off their rough edges, and the second biggest-selling album of all time.

1981: Motörhead *No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith* (Bronze)
The classic line-up of Lemmy, 'Fast' Eddie Clarke and 'Philthy Animal' Taylor caught live and at their peak. Entered the UK chart at No.1, launching a new golden era for homespun hard rock and metal.

1982: Iron Maiden *Number Of The Beast* (EMI)
Picking up the baton from Motörhead and fronted by new singer Bruce Dickinson, Maiden's third album was also a UK chart-topper and the crowning glory of the NWOBHM.

1983: Metallica *Kill 'Em All* (Megaforce)
Initially written off as a joke in some quarters, the sound of four snot-nosed kids from San Francisco playing at warp-speed broke thrash metal in general, and its protagonists in particular, from out of the underground.

1984: Van Halen *1984* (Warner Bros)
A hard rock classic, and also ultimately a valediction crafted from Eddie Van Halen's discovery of synths and David Lee Roth ascending to his pomp. A new generation of Sunset Strip bands took heed and burst out from behind it.

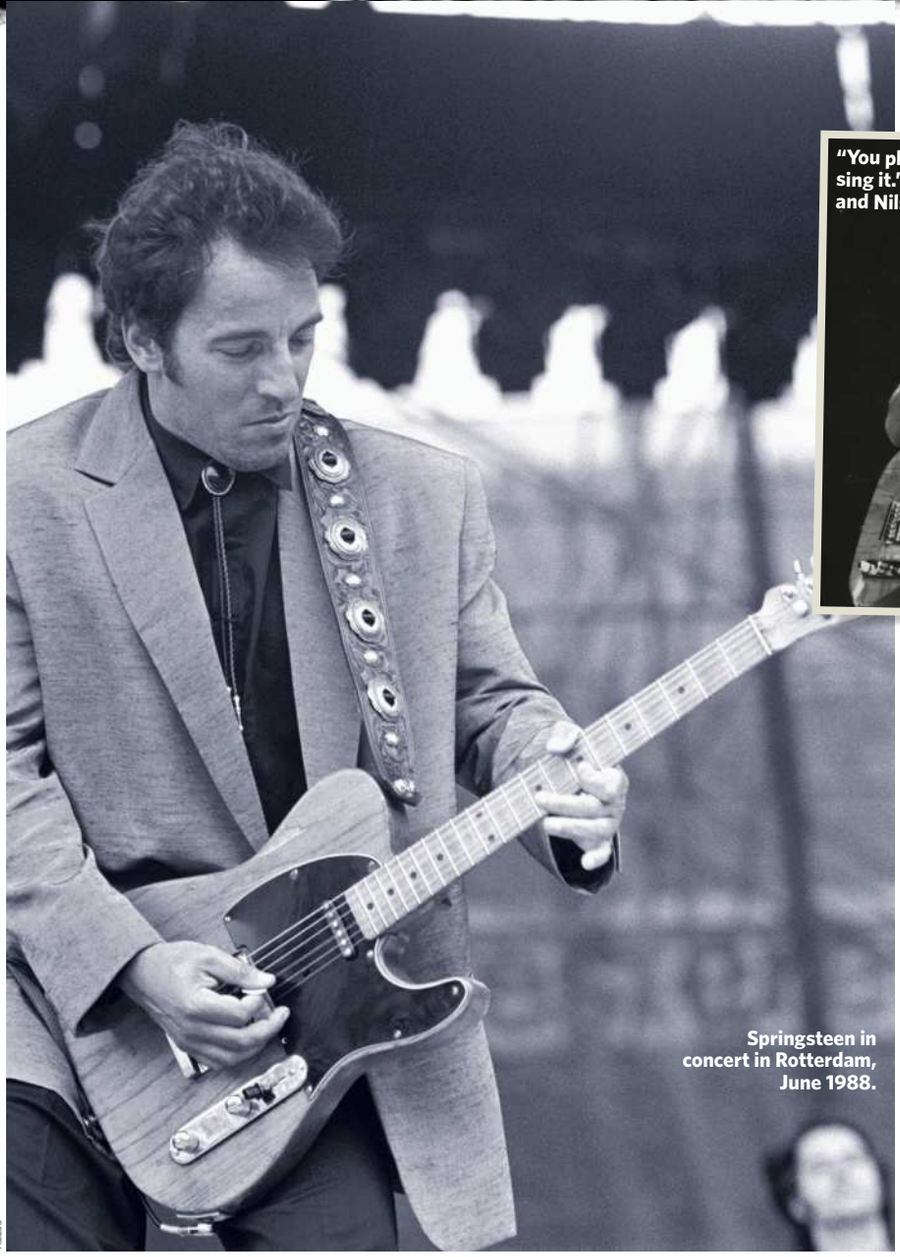
1985: Sisters Of Mercy *First And Last And Always* (Merciful)
Rising up from a crypt in Leeds, of all places, and articulated by the sepulchral-voiced Andrew Eldritch, the Sisters Of Mercy's opening shot struck a first, doom-laden blow for goth-rock.

1986: Bon Jovi *Slippery When Wet* (Mercury)
What was begun with Van Halen's *1984* peaked here as Jon Bon Jovi's pretty-boy looks got boosted by songwriter Desmond Child's hit-making Midas touch, and hair-metal rode the resulting wave to multi-platinum sales.

1987: Guns N'Roses *Appetite For Destruction* (Geffen)
The year after *Slippery*, something more febrile and hostile exploded out from Sunset Strip, founded on Axl Rose's near-psychotic vocals and a barrel-load of toxic Aerosmith-meets-Sex Pistols riffs. The rest is bloody history.

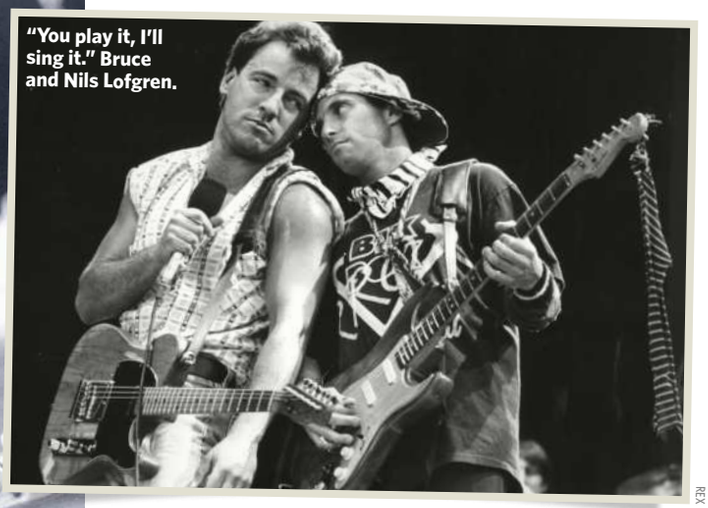
1988: Jane's Addiction *Nothing's Shocking* (Warner Bros)
Out of subterranean LA yet again and sounding like the unholy but thrilling merging of Led Zeppelin and Bauhaus, this was the catalyst for another lurch in the pop culture zeitgeist and towards the alt.rock revolution.

1989: Pixies *Doolittle* (4AD)
Ending the decade detonating their quirky, noisy songs into wrap-around choruses, Black Francis and cohorts set in motion the sound that would be at the beginning of the 90s' snowball on Nirvana's *Nevermind*.



Springsteen in concert in Rotterdam, June 1988.

GETTY



"You play it, I'll sing it." Bruce and Nils Lofgren.

REX

rich beyond his wildest dreams and married to a fashion model. Wrestling with these new realities, Springsteen found himself turning back down the same dark, bumpy road that had led to *Nebraska*.

"I just kind of felt burned out," he told *Rolling Stone* in 1992. "The whole image of me that had been created – and that I'm sure I promoted – it really always felt like, 'Hey, that's not me.' I mean, the macho thing, that was never me. It's funny what you create. But in the end, I think, the only thing you can do is destroy it."

In the first instance, Springsteen tried to adapt to married life at his sprawling house in Rumson. A box set, *Live 1975-1985*, came and went, selling truckloads, and gradually he applied himself again to the task of staking out his next journey. He had his engineer Toby Scott come out to the property and help build a studio in the carriage house adjacent to the main building, and began writing songs that reflected his new reality.

To begin with these were sweet, tender love songs, such as *All That Heaven Will Allow*. Springsteen taped them solo with Scott engineering, and using his newly acquired Kurzweil synthesiser to add drums, horns and string sections. However, storm clouds were soon gathering on the horizon and occasioned by what Springsteen obliquely termed was his "coming to grips with the complexity of what I was finding out".

"Juli [Julianne Phillips, who Springsteen had married in May 1985] was a lovely girl," E Street Band keyboard player Roy Bittan revealed to Ames Carlin. "But [Bruce] just seemed like he was trying to be a different person. I think he was trying to develop a way of being on a social level. And Julianne wasn't anywhere on his train of thought."

On *Nebraska*, Springsteen had hidden his psychic wounds behind third-person characters, but now he held them up for scrutiny in confessional, self-lacerating songs like *One Step Up*, *Two Faces* and *Brilliant Disguise*. The doomed trajectory of his three-year marriage, and to whom it was he apportioned the blame for its failure, was made explicit in the first of these, an ominous trip into his heart of darkness, masquerading as a lilting lullaby. '*When I look at myself I don't see the man I wanted to be*,' he sang in a doleful voice. '*Somewhere along the line I slipped off track*.'

Tunnel Of Love was completed in seven months and rolled out on October 9, 1987. Peering out from the cover, attired in a black suit as if for a funeral, was a very different-looking Springsteen from the one of *Born In The USA*. But then the sound of the record itself was also from another place entirely. In essence it was Springsteen's first fully grown-up album, a collection of subdued, stately songs laced with hard-won wisdom and an overpowering sense of regret. It went to No.1 on both sides of the Atlantic, but nonetheless scared off the gawkers who had flocked to *Born In The USA* – as Springsteen surely meant it to do.

Like *Nebraska*, *Tunnel Of Love* also ended up being almost a solo record. Springsteen had individual members of the E Street Band come out to Rumson to put down parts, but scant few of their contributions made the finished album. He contemplated doing a solo tour as well, but relented, although the subsequent dates were billed pointedly as 'Bruce Springsteen's Tunnel Of Love Express featuring the E Street Band'. And the set-lists were shorn of such staples as *Thunder Road*, *Badlands* and *Born In The USA*. Still, Springsteen and his cohorts together remained a formidable force.

Yet the tour wound up being the shortest they had undertaken since *Born To Run*, and was played out against an unfamiliar backdrop of negative headlines and revelations about Springsteen's private life. On the European leg during the summer of 1988, Springsteen made public that he was in a relationship with Patti Scialfa. Soon after, Julianne Phillips filed for divorce. Around the same time, Mike Batlan and a second now-former crew member, Doug Sutphin, filed a suit alleging that Springsteen had among other things failed to pay them overtime wages, in contravention of US labour laws. The case was subsequently settled out of court, but both events sheared chunks of veneer off the enduring but wholly unrealistic perception of Springsteen as being near-saintly.

> "[*Tunnel Of Love*] was a really tough time for everyone."
>
> Nils Lofgren

Not much more than a year after wrapping up the *Tunnel Of Love* tour, Springsteen called up each member of the E Street Band, except Scialfa, with whom he was now living, and told each one of them he was dissolving the group. He meant, he said, "to do something else and you're not going to be part of it for a while".

"That was a really tough time for everyone," Nils Lofgren says now. "Inevitably it hit harder the guys that had been there from the start. But you had a musical genius who was now in his late thirties and had only played with seven other people. Anybody that talented will need to spread their

Springsteen and Roy Bittan during the Stand Up For Heroes benefit concert in New York on November 3, 2010.

Bittan on The Boss

The E Street Band's keyboard player on Bruce's 1980s.

Having replaced David Sancious as the E Street Band's pianist in August 1974, Roy Bittan has been at Springsteen's side since *Born To Run*. Which makes him ideally placed to chart The Boss's extraordinary rise. "He can play anything," Springsteen once marvelled of Bittan. "He's always there for me."

Can you trace the onset of Bruce's superstardom to* The River*?
Born To Run had been such a breakout record, but then Bruce got embroiled in a lawsuit with his manager. Because of an injunction, we weren't even allowed to play for a while. So there was tremendous pressure for *Darkness On The Edge Of Town* [1978] to do well. But we were still having a hard time financially. With *The River* we suddenly had a hit single with *Hungry Heart*, and that made a big difference.

Did you anticipate Bruce becoming so huge in the eighties?
From the moment that I first saw him perform, maybe six months before I actually joined the band, I was sure that this guy was going to be a big star. Between his charisma and stage persona, and certainly the songs, he was writing with a depth that few very people achieve.

The River did well, but* Born In The USA *took him on to a different level.
The success of *Born In The USA* was something nobody could have figured. It turned into a phenomenon. Sometimes there are moments when art and commerce just collide. And it went supernova at that particular moment.

Was 1987's more low-key* Tunnel Of Love *partly a reaction against the enormous popularity of* Born In The USA*?
Bruce has always gone up and down. Many times we've done a big album, then he's gone out and done something small. I think *Tunnel Of Love* was really a result of him going through some personal things with his first marriage. I think it was a very internal, personal record for him, and the recording process reflected that. It was the first record that we really didn't cut live.

After he dispensed with the E Street Band in 1989, you were the only group member he brought back for* Human Touch *and* Lucky Town *three years later. How come?
I don't think there was a conscious decision to disband the group and just use me. It was sort of happenstance. I think it all played into my ability to interpret Bruce's ideas. There was something about our musical backgrounds. Our roots were such that when he wrote something, I always understood where it came from. We were very well suited.

Racing in the street: Springsteen circa 1987.

GETTY x2

> "The pursuit of immortality, I'll chase that as hard and fast as the next guy."
>
> Bruce Springsteen

wings. Hey, it was what it was."

Springsteen had by then also moved with Scialfa from New Jersey and into a palatial $14m house in Beverly Hills. "I kept my promises," he reasoned to Jim Henke three years later. "I didn't waste myself. I didn't die. I didn't throw away my musical values… I just felt like the guy who was *Born In The USA* had left his bandana behind, you know?"

He didn't admit to it, but he had shed so much more than just that. For right then, at the end of his tumultuous 80s, he seemed to be in flight from many of the people and places that had helped shape and make him, like a man in search of a new and as yet indistinct set of answers. It was, in fact, just as he'd sung it in the previous decade: '*Someday girl, I don't know when, we're gonna get to the place where we really want to go/But till then, tramps like us, baby we were born to run.*'

His route to finding those answers proved potholed and circuitous. With Roy Bittan and a bunch of hotshot session musicians, Springsteen next made a brace of albums and released them simultaneously in March 1992. *Human Touch* was buffed to too fine a sheen; *Lucky Town* was grittier, but both sold disappointingly. Afterwards, he again flew solo on the understated *The Ghost Of Tom Joad* album of 1995.

Now married and the parents of a young son and daughter, he and Scialfa moved back to New Jersey the following year. Back in his home state, in 1999 Springsteen reconvened the E Street Band, with Van Zandt rejoining the line-up alongside Lofgren, for a euphoric reunion tour and then an album, *The Rising*, written from under and about the shadow of the 9/11 attacks on the US. It was a critical and commercial hit. Springsteen followed it with a further six records – some made with the band, some without – and toured regularly .

Time has been good to him, but it has nonetheless extracted its inevitable toll. Cancer took the E Street Band's Danny Federici in April 2008, aged 58. Four years later, the big man, saxophone player Clarence Clemons, was claimed by a stroke at 69. Springsteen and the E Street Band, though, roll on, their shows together now benedictions to fallen comrades and more of a ritual than ever they were, and with The Boss having about him the air of one who is sure at last of his place in the grand scheme of things.

"I was talking to someone a while back," he told me in 2009, "and said: 'You look at my house – Bruce Springsteen lives there.' Someday it'll be 'Bruce Springsteen used to live there.' And someday after that, nobody's going to remember who lived there. They'll just drive on by down the highway. That's the way it plays out. And I'm comfortable with that. The pursuit of immortality, I'll chase that as hard and fast as the next guy. But I don't kid myself about how much of it is in store for me."

★TOUCH ME I'M SICK

The riff was stolen, the lyrics were just 'something funny' and it came out on 7" single when vinyl was in its death throes. So how did *Touch Me...* kick-start grunge?

WORDS: KEN McINTYRE

FK ME, THAT'S SICK!**

Mark Arm claims that the lyrics to *Touch Me I'm Sick* were just a funny idea that he didn't think too much about. But rumour persists that the song's subject matter is darker and creepier than Arm admits.

The Allmusic Guide says that Arm's lyrics "wallowed gleefully in disease, self-loathing, angst, and dirty sex", and *Touch Me* is often interpreted as a black humour song from the point of view of a man with Aids: '*I won't live long, and I'm full of rot/Gonna give you, girl, everything I got,*' go the lyrics. '*I'm diseased, I don't mind/I'll make you love me 'till the day you die.*' Is Arm just embarrassed about a serious issue?

Whatever, it's little wonder that it's also the title of a book by Tom Reynolds: *Touch Me, I'm Sick: The 52 Creepiest Love Songs You've Ever Heard.*

Touch Me I'm Sick may very well be the most psychotic debut single ever released. First there's the burst of terrifying fuzz, like a runaway buzz-saw tearing through a crowded city street. Then a gargly, half-mad howl, the panicky yelp of a rabid dog falling down a well. Grunting, maniacal laughter. A propulsive, sub-Stooges sex-beat. Snarl and spit and threats. A guitar solo that sounds like someone wrestling a rattlesnake – and losing. And then, the most confusing come-on ever: "*Fuck Me, I'm sick!*"

Mudhoney, an entirely new entity assembled from the surliest members of Seattle's glam-dirge almost-legends Green River, sounded like they were declaring war on everybody. The single, initially a tiny, understated release on a doomed medium, quickly spread like some sort of nasty virus, infecting college radio stations across the US and beyond, spreading Mudhoney's garage-gunk splatter-fest far and wide, sowing the sickly seeds of the burgeoning grunge-rock movement.

It all started in 1984 with Green River, a sludgy punk-metal monstrosity formed by high-school buddies Mark Arm and Steve Turner. Also in the band were drummer Alex Vincent and future Pearl Jammers Stone Gossard and Jeff Ament. Their sound was part Stooges, part Sabbath, part 12-car pile-up. And although they sold precious few records in their day, the were clearly a good decade or so ahead of their time.

Steve Turner quit after the release of their first EP, citing a distaste for their ever-more metal direction. Mark Arm hung on for the duration, but ultimately got sacked from his own band after a disastrous west coast jaunt. By late 1987 Turner and Arm decided it was time to get things rolling again.

Mudhoney officially formed on January 1, 1988. Just four months later *Touch Me I'm Sick* hit the streets. The idea for the single came about when Arm mentioned his new band to Sub Pop label owner Bruce Pavitt.

"I was like: 'Hey, I got this new band,'" Arm says. "And he knew all the people. I played him this boom-box recording of what we did which just sounded like 'sssshhhhh-crackle-crackle-sssshhhh'. You couldn't really tell what was going on. And he was like: 'Why don't you just go in one weekend with Jack Endino and record the songs so we can hear what they are?' It was a total leap of faith on his part. He knew everyone involved and trusted our instincts. And that demo actually became our first single."

As for the riff that opens the song, Arm says it's mostly borrowed: "Steve had this guitar riff that was inspired by a local band called the Nights And Days," he says. "But if you look to the origins of that riff it's actually like the Yardbirds' *Happenings Ten Years Time Ago* and/or the fast part of the Stooges' *I'm Sick Of You*. As far as the lyrics go, I think I just came up with this idea 'Touch me I'm sick' and thought it was funny and ran with it." (Rumours persist that the lyrics have a darker edge than Arm may want to admit – see box, left.)

Touch Me I'm Sick was released in August of 1988 on seven-inch vinyl. Vinyl singles were on a rapid decline by the late 80s, but the concept appealed to the record-collector-minded band. Sub Pop released a limited edition of 1,000 copies.

"One thousand seemed like a lot at the time," Arm chuckles. "Eight hundred of them were done on coloured vinyl, mostly brown. And there were 200 on black which were intended to send to radio stations, because we figured people wouldn't steal them if they were black, even though they were the rarer part of that pressing."

Although the single is still in print, 20 years later it's instant rarity kick-started a new wave of vinyl lust, and first editions routinely command three-figure prices.

"It seems a little silly, because the music's available. If you're really obsessed with this artifact, than I guess that's cool, but if you just want to hear the songs… I mean, you can find them," Arm laughs.

Interestingly, the band never considered *Touch Me…* to be the A-side of the single: "In our minds, *Sweet Young Thing* was the A-side. But *Touch Me I'm Sick* is the song that got picked up by John Peel and the people in college radio stations, and it's the song that resonated with most people. You can't predict that stuff."

"The beauty of it is that it's two minutes long. It's not like it's *Free Bird*."

The gleefully obnoxious *Touch Me…* established Mudhoney as the kings of Seattle-fuzz, and 20 years later it's still an integral part of their live set. And, luckily for the band, they still like it.

"We've played a few shows here and there without it, but the people want to hear it," Arm says. "So why not? It's a great song. The beauty of it is that it's two minutes long. It's not like it's *Free Bird* where you have to suffer through 10 minutes of playing it every night."

"OK, where's the honey?"

CHARLES PETERSON/PRESS X2

Mudhoney: possibly the most psychotic debut single ever released.

THE FACTS
RELEASE DATE
August 1, 1988
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
Ha ha! No.
PERSONNEL
Jack Ely
Vocals, guitar
Mark Arm
Vocals, guitar
Steve Turner
Guitar
Matt Lukin
Bass
Dan Peters
Drums
WRITTEN BY
Mark Arm and Steve Turner
PRODUCER
Jack Endino
LABEL
Sub Pop
FACT
First editions contain a cryptic inscription on the A-side: "What does the word 'crack' mean to you?"

NEVER
TOO YOUNG
TO DIE.

THE YEAR OF LIVING Dangerously

WORDS: JON WIEDERHORN

If 1988 was the year **Guns N' Roses** became superstars, then 1989 saw them flying off the rails. From the controversy of *GN'R Lies* to their on-stage meltdown with the Rolling Stones, this is the story of 12 insane months with The World's Most Dangerous Band.

FROM THEIR EARLIEST days as the brat-princes of Sunset Strip onwards, Guns N' Roses thrived on chaos. The spark of volatility that coursed through their veins defined their music – never more so than on *Appetite For Destruction*, the feral debut album that would turn them from messy hopefuls into the biggest rock'n'roll band on the planet.

The all-encompassing success of *Appetite* masked the fact that it had been slow out of the blocks. Released in July 1987, it took 12 months for the album to properly break. Although when it finally did, in the summer of 1988, there was nothing and no one that could stop it.

But that was just the beginning of their fame and notoriety – and of their problems. The road to success was littered with insanity and carnage, but it had nothing on what would follow. With *Appetite For Destruction* an unstoppable tsunami, Guns N' Roses were about to enter the craziest period of an already crazy career. Between the end of 1988 and the end of 1989 they'd become the most talked about, celebrated and controversial band around – all on the back of just one stopgap album and a handful of live appearances.

That this period would push them to the brink of extinction in the most public manner imaginable wasn't the most surprising thing about those 12 months. The fact that they all made it out alive was. Not for nothing did GN'R start billing themselves as The World's Most Dangerous Band. And it was a reputation they more than lived up to.

"Being involved with Guns N' Roses at that point was insane," says Tom Zutaut, the A&R man who signed the band to Geffen Records and remained at their side as their success escalated. "They were the biggest band in the world and they were out of control. That was extremely stressful. I woke up every day listening to the radio, fully expecting to hear that Slash was dead. But there are just certain bands that nothing can stop – no amount of alcohol, no amount of drugs. Guns were one of those."

NEIL ZLOZOWER - ATLASICONS.COM

GN'F'R in 1987 (l to r): Duff McKagan, Slash, Axl Rose, Izzy Stradlin, Steve Adler.

GETTY

In the summer of 1988, with sales of *Appetite For Destruction* having stalled at around 250,000 and with little support from MTV, Guns N' Roses were invited to open for Aerosmith. By the time they'd finished the tour, the record had sold more than two million copies.

Arlett Vereecke (personal PR, 1987-1991): People related to them because they were very real, and it was magical when they took the stage.

Marc Canter (photographer and friend of the band): They were a bunch of people that were all meant to be together, that were all there for the same reason, but they each had their own troubles. Anything could have happened at any time.

++ ++ ++

As momentum gathered, so did the problems. Drummer Steven Adler and guitarists Slash and Izzy Stradlin were nursing heroin habits, while Axl Rose was prone to turning up for shows late – or not showing up at all.

Alan Niven (manager, 1986-1991): The first show I ever did with them was opening for Alice Cooper in Santa Barbara, and Axl failed to show up. The band were in the dressing room saying: "We can't go on." I said: "You fucking get on that stage. I don't care who sings what, but you will do a show."

Slash: Izzy and Duff sang *Whole Lotta Rosie* and a few other covers. That set was a drunken jam fit for a bar – except we were in an arena.

Vereecke: Axl had terrible stage fright because there was so much focus on him. Plus he was insecure. He didn't see himself as a sexy, attractive guy. He always thought Slash was the guy who got all the attention. If he thought he wasn't ready or he was too petrified to hit the stage, it would take him hours to calm down.

Tom Zutaut (Geffen A&R man): Axl never faked it. If he couldn't channel that spark or spirit or that cosmic consciousness, he wouldn't take the stage. So he'd come on three hours late and play for four hours to make up for it. He was like that when it came to recordings. There was never a situation where you could just book a studio and lock it out and everyone would be there.

Niven: Axl was always extremely difficult. He would be late or wouldn't show up for rehearsals. There was always an excuse.

++ ++ ++

On August 20, 1988 Guns N' Roses appeared at the Monsters Of Rock Festival at Castle Donington. Booked before they'd taken off, they were second on the bill, sandwiched between Helloween and Megadeth. In the country that had first adopted the band, the show was a tipping point – sadly, one that was marred by tragedy.

Vereecke: When Guns went on, people stormed the stage and got crushed. It was awful. Later we found out two people had died.

Axl Rose (on stage at the Monsters Of Rock): "The promoters are asking us, in order to keep on playing, can you move back? Everybody try to take a step back. We've got some people unconscious… Have a nice day and don't fuckin' kill yourselves."

Slash: We had no idea that anyone was hurt, let alone killed. After we'd done the gig and were celebrating in a nearby pub, Alan came in, completely distraught, and gave us the news. It was horrible. Something that had been cause for celebration a moment before had become a tragedy.

Zutaut: Mentally, they understood that they were not personally responsible, but I think it contributed to the excesses. It's hard enough when you explode and become a figure that people worship. But to throw a tragedy like this on top of it caused them to use alcohol and drugs as a crutch to try and survive.

++ ++ ++

Even without the Donington tragedy, it was clear that GN'R were in no physical or mental condition to write a follow-up to *Appetite*. But the public were clamouring for more music.

Zutaut: Alan and I both saw that the success had splintered the band, and they were off in their own world. A couple of the guys were pretty remote, either due to fear of success, or drugs or alcohol.

Niven: Once *Appetite* started to rocket away from us, it was apparent that we'd be under incredible pressure to produce a follow-up. We all felt like it was a good idea to lessen the pressure by dropping something like *Lies* – not really a follow-up, but something that had quality to it and was a stopgap. I knew it would buy some time, and I was very aware it was going to take time for anybody in the band to deal with the success of that record.

Zutaut: When I first signed them they were

GNR in 1986 after playing support at a Ted Nugent gig. Band pictured with Geffen A&R staffers Teresa Ensenat and Tom Zutaut.

doing these unplugged gigs in conjunction with their electric gigs. I said: "You should record this stuff." Later, we did these unplugged sessions in conjunction with *Appetite*. I might get a phone call at one in the morning from Axl saying: "Hey, we want to go in the studio." The studio would open, and they would sit on chairs on the carpet and record unplugged ideas. There was this mind-set even before *Appetite* was completed to have these unplugged sessions, whether they were going to be for B-sides or some sort of EP.

Niven: Axl had an apartment at the time, and he said: "Come on over. I want to run a song by you." He sat on his bed with an acoustic guitar and played me *One In A Million*. At that moment he seemed incredibly vulnerable. It was almost like his personality shape-shifted and transported back to the very moment he experienced the things he was talking about in that song. The hook of the song was rather plaintive. *'One in a million'* – a faint wish in his mind that he might ever be.

Zutaut: I was sitting in the studio kitchen with Izzy. He was playing *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*, which the band was doing in their set at the time. All of a sudden he shifted the chords a little bit. That was the beginning of *Patience*. He started humming this great melody. I heard: *'Hey, said woman, take it slow,'* and other lines that ended up in the song. I said: "Man, that sounds really great. Why don't you finish that?" A couple of weeks later Axl was in the studio, so I said to Izzy: "Hey, play that song you did for Axl." Axl just loved it. So we went in and cut it as part of this idea to do an unplugged session. That became the core song for the whole session.

Vereecke: The other new acoustic song was *Used To Love Her* [featuring the lyrics, *'I used to love her but I had to kill her'*]. Izzy wrote that. He said it was about a dog. Axl said: "It could be about my girlfriend."

Vicky Hamilton (early GN'R manager): When I first heard that, I thought it was about me! I used to manage the band and then they hired Alan. I had put all this money into them and suddenly I was left with nothing. [Hamilton sued for $1 million, the band settled out of court with her for $30,000.]

> **"We'd be under pressure to produce a follow-up to Appetite. I knew Lies would buy us some time."**
>
> **ALAN NIVEN**

Steven Adler: We recorded [the] three new songs and an acoustic remake of *You're Crazy* at the Record Plant over a single weekend. I played on three songs and didn't stay a second longer than I needed to.

++ ++ ++

In addition to the four acoustic tracks, *Lies* included four 'live' songs originally released in December 1986 as *Live ?!*@ Like A Suicide*.

Adler: [Soon after we were signed], Tom had the idea for us to go in the studio and record an EP under our own label, Uzi Suicide, which was actually financed by Geffen. The idea was pretty novel at the time, although everyone does it now.

Canter: Spencer Proffer was going to record two songs at Pasha Studios: *Night Train* and *Sweet Child O' Mine*. Geffen was going to pay him $15,000 to do those two songs as a test, and if they liked them they'd give him a contract to do the whole record. But in case they didn't want to go with him, Spencer threw in the deal that they could record *Live ?!*@ Like A Suicide* in his studio. They recorded those songs when they were totally out of control. Nobody showed up on time. They'd throw up or pass out in the studio. But they got the songs done.

Zutaut: *Live ?!*@ Like A Suicide* got the band its first attention in the UK. No one in the US even knew it existed until after *Appetite* came out, and then they were begging us to re-release it. We figured it made sense to combine these two EPs and put out an album: it'll be easier to market, easier to sell; a lot of stores didn't even stock EPs.

++ ++ ++

The eight-track *GN'R Lies* was released on November 29, 1988, housed in an ironic, tabloid-style sleeve that proclaimed: "The Sex, The Drugs, The Violence: The Shocking Truth!"

Zutaut: *Lies* shot up the charts, right along with *Appetite*. We figured *Appetite* was peaking, but it just never stopped. It gave us great satisfaction to know that we had defeated the sophomore blues. *Patience* went to No.2, and that was a great follow-up to the enormous success of *Sweet Child O' Mine*.

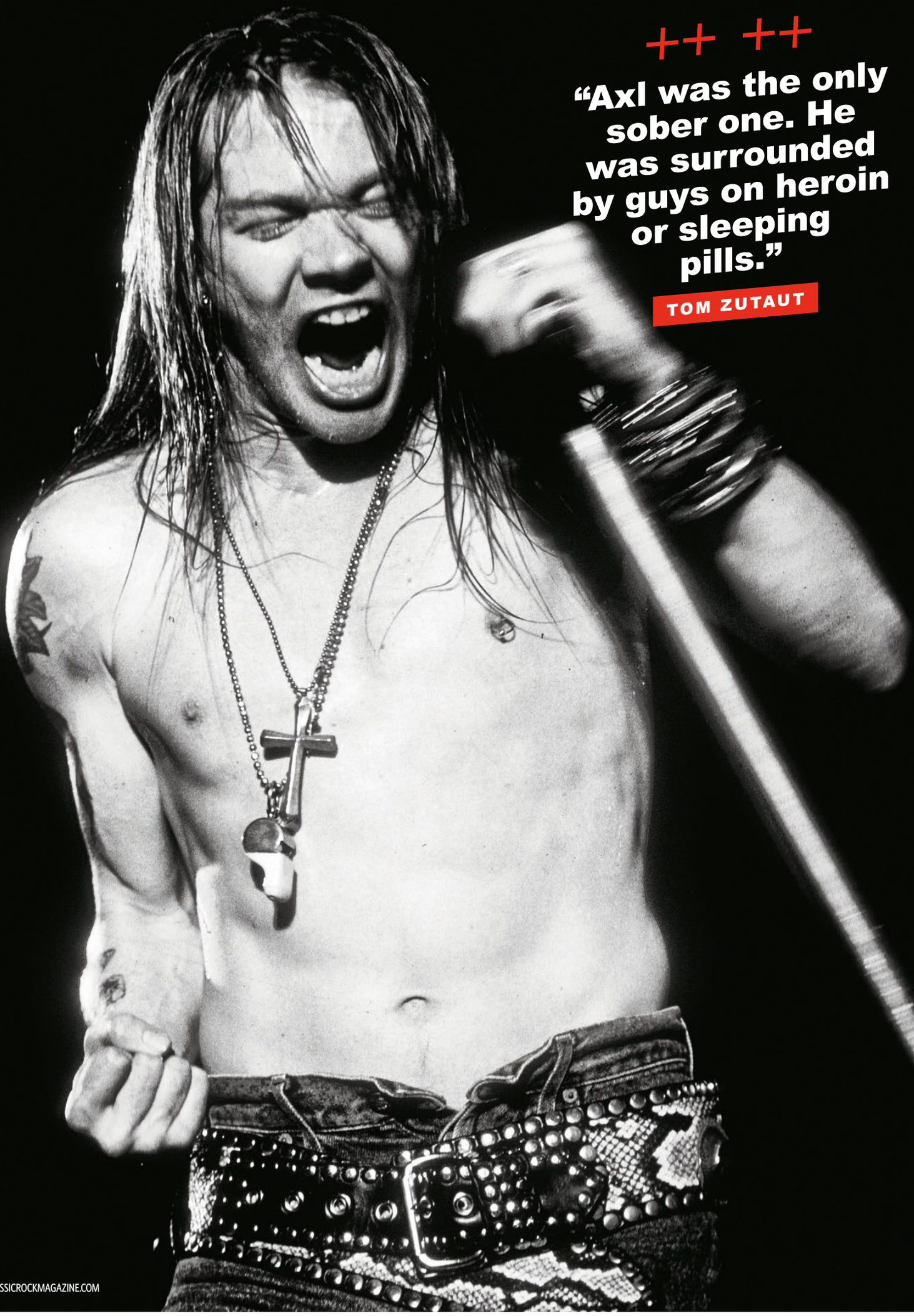
Niven: *Patience* was deliciously ironic, given the character of one or two individuals. Definitely part of the appeal of the band was the fact that it was a train wreck: the sense of spontaneity that they had contrasted magnificently with the contrivance of so many other bands. They were a real fucking band, with plenty of personality and character.

++ ++ ++

Lies was as controversial as it was successful. *Used To Love Her* drew accusations of misogyny, but that was nothing next to the storm caused by *One In A Million*. The lines: *'Police and niggers, get out of my way…'* and *'Immigrants and faggots, they make no sense to me'* provoked outrage from the black and gay communities.

Rose (speaking to *Rolling Stone* magazine): I started writing about wanting to get out of LA. I'd been to the Downtown LA Greyhound bus station. If you haven't been there, you can't say shit to me about what goes on and about my point of view. There are a large number of black men selling stolen jewellery, crack, heroin… rip-off artists selling parking spaces to parking lots that there's no charge for… I used the word 'nigger' because it's a word to describe somebody that is basically a problem. The word 'nigger' doesn't necessarily mean black.

Zutaut: Axl was not going to apologise for a factual



++ ++

"Axl was the only sober one. He was surrounded by guys on heroin or sleeping pills."

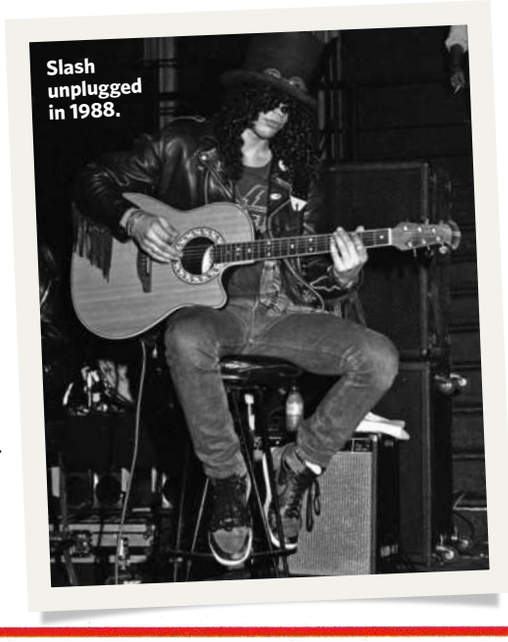
TOM ZUTAUT

story of what he experienced when he got off the bus. Slash apologised because there were very powerful people demanding an apology, and Slash, being half African American, was upset that people were offended.

Slash: We had a big disagreement about it, and the more I argued about it, the more adamant he was about putting it out there. It probably says a lot about our relationship.

Rose (speaking to *Rolling Stone*): When I use the word 'immigrants', what I'm talking about is going to a 7-11 or Village Pantries – a lot of people from countries like Iran, Pakistan, China, Japan et cetera get jobs in these convenience stores and gas stations. They treat you as if you don't belong here. I've been chased out of a store with Slash by a six-foot-tall Iranian with a butcher knife because he didn't like the way we were dressed.

Vereecke: Axl is definitely not homophobic. Axl is a lot more liberal than people give him credit for, trust me. And he's a lot nicer. He can be difficult, but he also has a really nice side to him.


Slash unplugged in 1988.

> **"The more I argued about One In A Million, the more Axl was adamant he was putting it out there."**
>
> **SLASH**

Rose (speaking to *Rolling Stone*): I've had some very bad experiences with homosexuals. When I was first coming to Los Angeles I was about eighteen or nineteen. On my first hitchhiking ride, this guy told me I could crash at his hotel. I went to sleep and woke up while this guy was trying to rape me… I pinned him between the door and the wall. I had a straight razor, and I pulled the razor and said: "Don't ever touch me! Don't ever think about touching me!" Then I grabbed my stuff and split with no place to go, no sleep, in the middle of nowhere outside of St Louis. That's why I have the attitude I have.

Slash: I didn't agree with it when it came out and still don't, but no one really cares about it any more. I don't think it did us any harm, not in the long run.

++ ++ ++

The uproar did nothing to damage the sales of *Lies*, which peaked at No.4 in the US. GN'R ducked the crossfire when they flew to Japan and Australia in December 1988. But in typically chaotic fashion, there were more problems on the horizon.

Niven: We were on our way to Japan, and Izzy sidles up next to me and goes: "Dude, I got my stash. I'm set." He's got this little boom box, and he proceeds to show me where he's hidden his heroin underneath the battery compartment. I'm looking at him, going: "You're out of your tiny fucking mind. Get rid of that right fucking now!" So off he went and, yeah, he got rid of it all right. But for him, getting rid of it means 'I'll just have it all now'.

He passed out on the floor and we had to carry him on to the flight. He was still out of it when they got to Japan. They had to wheel him through immigration in a cart. When he came to, he looked out the window and went: "Where the fuck am I?" He called Steven and said: "Where are we, man?" And Steven said: "Tokyo, dude!" And Izzy's going: "We're in Tokyo? *Really*?" I mean, he was out of it.

Vereecke: Slash once told me: "You do heroin once, and it's such a high that you want to do it again. The problem with that is, the minute you do it a second time, you're addicted to it."

Zutaut: Axl was the only sober one, and he was surrounded by guys that were either strung out on heroin, drugged out on pills or in an alcoholic stupor. And that added to some of the friction in the band. Axl didn't want to be around the guys that were all fucked up.

Vereecke: Axl wasn't really doing drugs, because of the medication he was on. He wasn't a big drinker either. People have a misconception of that. He he was the clean and mostly sober one He wanted to preserve his voice, he was serious about it.

Zutaut: One of the few times he did imbibe any drugs was after he and Erin [Everly, girlfriend and later wife] had a fight. He popped a bunch of pills. So she was concerned that he was suicidal and may have popped enough pills to kill himself. When the sheriffs got there they tried to get him to go to the hospital, and he refused and got belligerent. He laid out three or four sheriffs, so they called for reinforcements. He had superhuman strength because of the uppers he was on. They ended up with about twenty LA County Sheriffs with taser guns. They tasered him, like, ten or twelve times before they could subdue him. But they got him to the hospital and they pumped his stomach – basically, saved his life.

Niven: He overdosed, but I don't think that that was necessarily a situation of artificial euphoria. I am really pushed to think of him in terms of contentment or happiness. Was Axl ever happy? I don't think so.

To the outside world, neither the controversy nor the escalating drug problems could stop GN'R's rise. But internally, something had to be done. When the band returned to the US, Steven Adler went into rehab. In January 1989 the rest of the band played *Patience* at the American Music Awards, with ex-Eagles drummer Don Henley stepping in for Adler.

Don Henley: Fortunately it was a ballad that we played, not a balls-to-the-wall number. I rehearsed with Axl a couple of days, although the whole band never showed up. But it was a piece of cake.

Adler: When I got out, someone asked me why I hadn't appeared on the American Music Awards. I didn't know what the hell he was talking about. I was stunned and hurt. I can't begin to describe the feeling of betrayal. Nobody in our organisation even mentioned the AMAs to me.

++ ++

The instability within Guns N' Roses wasn't helped when the band flew to Chicago that summer at the behest of Axl, to write songs for a new album.

Niven: At some point Axl decided that the Guns N' Roses muse now resided in Chicago. Travel plans and apartment rentals were made. At least there was an effort being made by the band to concentrate on creating new songs.

McKagan: I assumed Axl would follow after us. After two weeks, Axl was a no-show. We were fucking pissed off. I started to drink harder. We did get some work done. We finished *Civil War* and wrote *Get In The Ring* and *Pretty Tied Up*.

Adler: At rehearsals I felt like I was being pushed out of the songwriting circle. The three of us would throw around ideas, then suddenly the exchange would be limited to Duff and Slash; my opinion didn't matter any more. Over the next two months we wrote thirty-three songs.

McKagan: Axl finally did show up in Chicago. He got into a fight with a girl we had befriended and trashed the place where we were living. That happened the day Izzy showed up. Izzy came upstairs, took one look at the damage (not to mention the various powders all over the place) and hightailed it the fuck out of there.

Adler: Seven weeks and five days later, Axl finally arrived. We had two days left in the studio and were anxious to show him all of the new material. He sat there like we were putting him through some kind of torture. Plain and simple, Axl wasn't interested in our material. He just wanted to record a new song he had been working on called *November Rain*. As for Izzy, he never showed.

++ ++ ++

Izzy Stradlin was dealing with his own problems. On August 27, 1989 the guitarist found himself in the headlines following an internal US flight. Not

GETTY / NEIL ZLOZOWER - ATLASICONS.COM

content with lighting up in a non-smoking section of the plane, he proceeded to relieve himself in the aisle. When the plane touched down, Stradlin was arrested for interfering with the duties of a flight crew – a federal offence.

Niven: Izzy was flying from Indiana back to LA. He'd been playing with his dogs, and one of them had bitten him on the face. So Izzy turns up with these marks all over his face, and the damned airline decided he wasn't presentable enough to fly in First Class, for which he paid his ticket. So they shoved him in the back in Coach. To mollify him they served him liquor as fast as they could. You've been denied your seat in First Class, they're getting you fucking drunk. He tried to use the bathroom and couldn't get in and thought, fuck it. I think I'll use the magazine rack.

FBI Agent R Scott Rivas: He stated: "I'm not waiting any longer," and unzipped his pants and urinated in the galley area in front of several passengers and a flight attendant.

Izzy Stradlin: That was my low point, where you kind of bottom out. I said: "Hey, I gotta change. This isn't working for me any more." So I got sober.

Niven: Of all of them, Izzy found the celebrity and fame the most tiresome and worthless, and it constricted his rock'n'roll heart. It amuses me how little attention he draws, yet to me he was the heart and soul of the band – an embodiment of the rock'n'roll attitude.

++ ++ ++

More chaos awaited GN'R at the MTV Music Awards in September 1989. Tensions already existed between the band and Sunset Strip rivals Mötley Crüe, but things got worse when Izzy allegedly made a pass at Crüe frontman Vince Neil's wife Sharise Ruddell at LA club The Cathouse. Neil decided to take revenge at the MTV Awards.

Sharise Ruddell: I was at The Cathouse and Izzy was hitting on me. He was all fucked up. I told him to get his hands off me because I was [Vince's] wife. Then he grabbed my shirt and pulled it down. I slapped him across the face, and he karate kicked me as hard as he could in the stomach. He knocked the wind out of me. And everyone saw it.

Niven: [At the MTV Awards] Guns N' Roses played *Free Fallin'* with Tom Petty. Afterwards, we're walking off the brightly lit stage into the darkness to our left, and suddenly Vince comes running over and popped Izzy in the face.

Vince Neil: When Izzy walked off stage, looking like a cross between Eric Stoltz in [the movie] *Mask* and Neil Young, I was waiting for him. All the blood rushed into my fist and I decked him. He fell to the ground like a tipped cow.

Tom Petty: As we walked off stage, Vince Neil from Mötley Crüe came running out of the wings and decked Izzy, hit him right in the face. Our sound guy, Jim Lenahan, was walking off the stage with us, and Lenahan was like, I don't even know this Izzy kid, but he's with us, so he decked Vince Neil. Izzy was getting a lot of black eyes in those days. I think he already had a black eye before Vince hit him.

Izzy Stradlin and Slash: the new Toxic Twins.

MARC CANTER - GETTY / NEIL ZLOZOWER - ATLASICONS.COM

> **"Vince Neil came running out of the wings and decked Izzy, hit him right in the face."**
>
> **TOM PETTY**

Niven: I grabbed Vince, put him very quickly on his back on the floor. My left hand was around his throat and my right hand was cocked and ready to smash his nose, and I actually had a fleeting moment of intelligent thought where I went: "If I do this, this is not going to be good," so I let him up.

Vereecke: They were all chasing to beat up Vince Neil for punching Izzy, but they didn't catch him. He got away. But that was all over Izzy screwing Vince Neil's girlfriend. Who knew they were that picky?

Vince Neil: Before we reached the exit, Axl came snarling after us like an overdressed Doberman. "C'mon, motherfucker. I'm going to fucking kill you!" he yelled at our backs. I twirled around. His face was sweaty and twisted. "Let's fucking go!" I said to him, and I meant it. He looked at me and squeaked like a little bitch: "Just don't fuck with my band again, okay?" And he walked away. [Next thing I knew] he was sending messages to me with instructions to meet him in the parking lot of Tower Records or on the boardwalk of Venice Beach.

++ ++ ++

Guns N' Roses' year of insanity was coming to a close, but there was one last twist. The Rolling Stones – a band who had inspired GN'R and one of the few groups who were more famous than them at that point – tapped up Axl and co. as support for the US leg of their Steel Wheels tour.

Niven: They offered us, as I remember, $50,000 a night. From a fiscal point of view I was dubious, because at that point Guns could clearly go out and sell out arenas on their own, which would more than double that take. Also, there was a little voice in my head going: "The Stones, touring again?" I mean, they always sell, but the previous tour hadn't gotten the most stunning of reviews. And I'm thinking: "Is this really a good idea?" Really, as far as I'm concerned, my boys are now the standard bearers of excessive glories of rock'n'roll. Why should they open for a bunch of landed gentry and English financiers? So, conceptually, for me, it didn't sit very well. The other aspect was I didn't consider the band to be in any condition whatsoever to be able to take on a tour of that length and magnitude.

GNR at the Cathouse, 1988.

Vereecke: Slash and Izzy were back on heroin. I'm pretty sure Steven was as well. Duff, I don't think so.

Niven: Much to the bemusement of the band's agent, I passed. Can you think of anybody who'd been offered to open for the Rolling Stones and said: "No, thank you." How fucked up in particular is that? Then, of course, the agent came back and they asked if four nights at the LA Coliseum would

GN'R on tour with the Stones in '89. Inset: Axl gets the moves with Jagger.

be of interest. He offered us what he thought was a "princely sum of money" – half a million dollars for the four nights. I asked for a day to think on it and run it by the guys. My thought was this: you got 77,000 tickets to sell in the LA Coliseum. I can see the Stones doing that twice, but four times? I cannot see them pulling it off four times, unless there's something or someone who's going to push it over the edge. And knowing that they had two confirmed and were holding two more shows, I rather felt that that described the circumstance.

So I went back to the agent and said: "Yes, you can tell Mr Jagger that we'd be delighted to accept his offer. Let's discuss the fee." And he said, "Well, we'll look for a bonus here and bonus there." And I said: "No. Let's do away with convoluted formulas. Please inform Mr Jagger that the fee is a million dollars." He just about choked on that. But guess what? Jagger came back and accepted, because he knew he needed Guns N' Roses to get the four nights.

++ ++ ++

On October 13, five days before opening for the Rolling Stones, Guns N' Roses played the third annual *RIP* magazine party at the Park View Plaza Hotel in downtown LA.

Lonn Friend (Editor, *RIP* magazine): The relationship with *RIP* was so close that I said: "Why don't you play our party? It will be your last club gig ever." It was so crowded the fire department came and kicked out 1,000 of my guests, including Alice Cooper and Steve Vai. I was worried Guns wouldn't show. Motörhead played, Faster Pussycat played. It was almost one in the morning, I've got my head in my hands, and this guy taps me on my shoulder. I look up and it's Axl. He goes: "Lonn, relax. We're going on." Five minutes later they just tore it down. They played for an hour and forty five minutes. It was truly one of the greatest sets they ever did.

Slash (on stage at *RIP* Party): "For anybody who said we were gonna be dead, fuck 'em."

As the shows with the Stones approached, the press set up the event as the ultimate battle of the bands: the v eteran rock'n'roll rebels versus the new breed. The excitement built – and so did the tension. Unbeknown to nearly everyone, Axl was growing disenchanted with his bandmates' recreational indulgences.

Niven: The day of the first show [October 18], Brian Ahern [the Stones' production manager] comes to me and he goes: "Your guy's not here. Tell me what I'm supposed to do." I said: "Do you have a contact in the LAPD who is an absolutely no-questions-asked guy?" And he said: "I do." So the guy came in and I told him: "I'm going to give you an address." And it was Axl's apartment. I said: "I want you to immediately send two no-questions-asked uniforms to this address, get the occupants out of that condominium in any which way they can, and bring them right here – in handcuffs if necessary."

They went and got him, and the band arrived on stage a mere twenty minutes late. I'm standing in the backstage feeling pretty damn clever. And that's right at the moment that Axl announces this is going to be the last show and he's going to retire.

Rose (on stage at the LA Coliseum): "I hate to do this on stage, but I tried every other fucking way. And unless certain people in this band get their shit together, these will be the last Guns N' Roses shows you'll fucking ever see. Cos I'm tired of too many people in this organisation dancing with Mister Goddamn Brownstone."

Niven: My heart went straight to my boots. That was an entirely sociopathic, narcissistic way to deal with the circumstance. And fuck me, who are we opening for? Keith, who's got four IV drips hanging off his mic stand! What the hell! Let's get through the four shows and we'll talk about it.

So Axl finishes the set and goes barrelling off the stage, glaring at everybody. [GN'R's label boss] David Geffen was coming down the steps, effusive: "Oh, great show, Axl!" And Axl looks at him and goes: "Well, I hope you liked it, fucker, because it's the last fucking one!" You should have seen Geffen's face.

Vereecke: Axl had simply had enough of everyone doing drugs. And he may well have saved their lives, because believe me, they were scared of Axl.

Niven: Ten o'clock the next morning I'm over at Axl's apartment trying to talk him into doing the rest of the Stones shows. I brought a big bag of doughnuts with me. And as I sat and listened – and as he complained about everybody and everything – I just kept on feeding him doughnuts. Eventually he started to get a little bit of a sugar rush, and he conceded that if I could get Slash to humiliate himself by apologising live on stage, then he might think about doing the night's show.

Slash: I didn't think that it was smack that was causing the problems in the band, but I had to do something. So when the time came, I walked out there and, rather than apologise, I went into some banter about heroin and what it can do. Axl was pleased, and the vibe of the whole band turned around as he walked out on stage and we launched into *Mr. Brownstone*.

Niven: Slash took a bullet for everybody and was publicly humiliated on stage. And, of course, by the fourth night Axl was in nirvana. He was loving playing in front of 77,000 people every night.

> **"Being involved with GN'R at that point was insane. I woke up every day expecting to hear Slash was dead."**
>
> **TOM ZUTAUT**

++ ++

Guns N' Roses made it through their run supporting the Stones intact. And, more amazingly, they made it to the end of the year alive.

But the seeds for the demise of the original incarnation had been sewn. The volatile mix of personalities, egos and chemicals that had lifted them above the Sunset Strip pack had turned toxic. Less than a year later, Steven Adler would be fired for drug use during sessions for what would become the twin *Use Your Illusion* albums. Those two records and the massive world tour that followed were hugely successful. There was insanity and chaos, of course. But it was a different kind of insanity and chaos. By the time it was done, the original rebel spirit of Guns N' Roses was gone, together with many of the people who played a part in their rise.

"Even with all the heartache, I still have fond memories," says Alan Niven, who parted company with the band in 1991. "And I tend to look back at that era, in particular 1989, as the high-water mark of the original band for me. Despite it all, the band triumphed, and triumphed sharing a stage with the Rolling Stones."

Additional sources: Slash: The Autobiography – Slash And Anthony Bozza (Harper, 2008); It's So Easy (And Other Lies) – Duff McKagan (Orion ,2012); My Appetite For Destruction: Sex & Drugs & Guns N' Roses – Steven Adler (HarperCollins, 2011); The Dirt – Mötley Crüe with Neil Strauss (It Books, 2002).

Dinosaur Jr.

Freak Scene

Born from a wild personality clash, *Freak Scene* was the trio's alt-hit debut single – and the final straw that led to bassist Lou Barlow being slyly kicked out of the band.

Words: **Rob Hughes**

The mid-80s were tough times for bands with noisy guitars. Punk was long dead, while its American cousin, hardcore, was running out of gas, leaving poker-faced goths, fey indie types and cartoonish hair metallers to run riot.

Into this void strode Dinosaur Jr., three suburban kids from Amherst, Massachusetts who invested the sounds of their heroes – Black Sabbath, Neil Young, the Stones, The Byrds – with the energy of Black Flag and Minor Threat, in the process reviving that most maligned of rock traditions: the guitar solo.

Their first two albums – 1985's *Dinosaur* and 1987's *You're Living All Over Me* – had brought together crunching riffs and howling feedback under the umbrella of singer/guitarist J Mascis's near-comatose, proto-slacker drawl. But their seemingly effortless noise was underpinned by a growing tension between Mascis and bassist Lou Barlow. The former was textbook passive-aggressive, who communicated little but was wholly in charge. By contrast, Barlow thrived on ideas and interaction. The two approaches were approaching terminal breakdown.

Released in September 1988 as the lead single from *Bug*, their third album, *Freak Scene* was where everything peaked. It was the definitive alt.rock anthem, a three-and-a-half-minute barrage of sound that opened the door for grunge while also finding room for not one but two face-melting guitar solos. But it also represented the nadir of the band's internal tumult, signalling the end of this incarnation of Dinosaur Jr. just as they made their breakthrough.

Parent album *Bug* was recorded at Fort Apache North, the Boston studio run by engineers Paul Q Kolderie and Sean Slade, who would go on to work with The Pixies, Hole and many more. "Fort Apache was better than anywhere else we'd recorded," Mascis remembers today. "It sounded better than the stuff we'd done before."

But neither he nor Barlow remember the sessions fondly. "J was just so passionless in his whole approach to it," Barlow recalls.

"*Bug* was a bad time," Mascis adds. "The band was falling apart. It reminds me of when I got to interview Ozzy Osbourne and was asking him about *Sabotage*. He hated that record because it reminded him of being in the studio with all these lawyers and having a really bad time. So much so that he couldn't listen to it any more. *Bug* was kind of a similar thing."

Compared to the more sprawling songs that made up the rest of the album, *Freak Scene* was more straightforward. Musically, its collision of melody and raw noise was partly indebted to Mascis's beloved Black Sabbath. But Barlow was initially unsure about the song's merits. "Don't get me wrong, I love it," he says. "But my first impression was: 'Wow, J's aiming real low with this one.' I usually wasn't critical of his songwriting, as I kind of worshipped his ability, but it was very simple compared to these instrumental epics that he was coming up with."

"It was poppier," concedes Mascis. "It was probably about trying to deal with people or friends trying to communicate with me. It was kind of pointing out some weird relationship."

"Ozzy told me he hated *Sabotage* because it reminded him of being in the studio and having a bad time. This was a similar thing."

The album marked the apex of Mascis's authoritarian approach in the studio. He insisted on scripting all the instrumental parts for each song, then telling Barlow and Murph (drums) how to play them. "*Freak Scene* was one of the first ones we did like that," Barlow confirms. "He had the whole thing down: 'These are the chords you're gonna strum on bass.' Whereas before, I was always given more wiggle room in terms of coming up with my own parts."

Mascis admits that it all added to the fractious atmosphere: "I thought it was the easiest way to spend the least amount of time together."

The song's lyrics were entirely apposite. The tale of a love-hate relationship caught in irresolvable flux, it could've been about the band itself. *'So fucked I can't believe it,'* croaked Mascis. *'If there's a way I wish we'd see it/How could it work just can't conceive it/Oh what a mess it's just to leave it.'*

Despite the internal strains, *Freak Scene* struck a chord with music fans looking for something different. Mainstream radio wouldn't touch it, its success was fostered by word of mouth, a burgeoning underground fan base, and airplay on what few indie stations there were. It spent three months in the alternative rock chart.

Freak Scene heralded a perceptible cultural shift. Barlow had already noted the Dinosaur Jr. influence on British bands like My Bloody Valentine, while Nirvana took the band's slacker aesthetic to the mainstream. The most overt example of its influence, according to Barlow, arrived in 1992. "Paul Kolderie and Sean Slade did Radiohead's *Creep* after we'd done *Bug*," says the bassist. "I remember hearing that and thinking they've picked up something from the Dinosaur Jr. session."

Barlow was long gone by then. Just months after *Bug*'s release, Mascis and Murph told him the band had split. The next the bassist heard, they were touring Australia with his replacement. Barlow poured his scorn into his new project, Sebadoh. Songs like *The Freed Pig* were thinly veiled attacks on Mascis. Barlow has admitted to resorting to "small-minded" revenge tactics: "I sued J, wrote songs about him, shit-talked him any opportunity I got."

After Mascis put Dinosaur Jr. on ice in 1997, the original trio eventually put aside past issues and re-formed in 2005. Last year they performed *Bug* live in its entirety. "The whole act of playing the record over again on stage really redeemed it for me," says Barlow. "I suddenly thought: 'Fuck, it's a great record! I get it! Now I know why people love it.'"

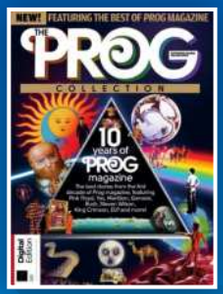
INSANE AT THE MEMBRANES' Not exactly a band renowned for their levity, Dinosaur Jr. filmed an uproarious video for *Freak Scene* in the back garden of the Manchester home of Membranes' John Robb. Cue mutilated toy dolls, comedy glasses and the ritualistic head-shaving of sound mixer and sometime tour manager, Ajay Saggar. "The Membranes were fucking cool, so we ended up crashing at their house," recalls Lou Barlow. "At least once when we stayed with them there was mushroom-picking and mushroom tea. They had this great house with all this crap on the lawn. Making the video was a rare moment where we kinda sat together and had a reasonably good time. Everything else I associate with that period was just really mechanical."

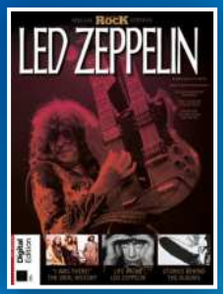
GETTY

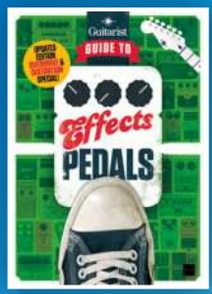
Dinosaur Jr (l to r): J Mascis, Lou Barlow, Murph.

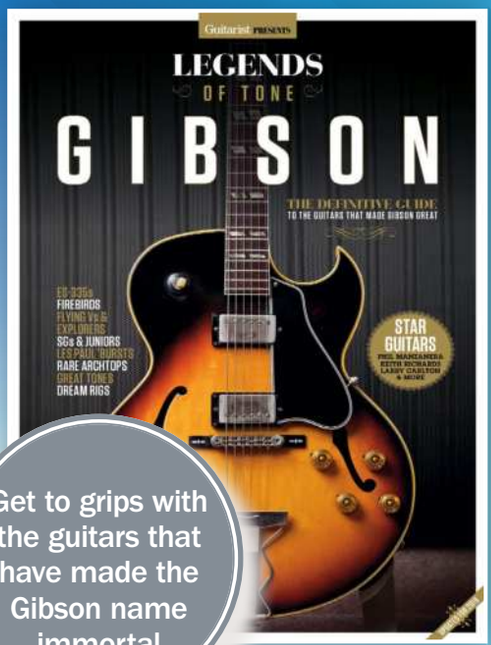
THE FACTS
RELEASE DATE
September 1988
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
Did not chart
PERSONNEL
J Mascis
Lead vocals, guitar
Lou Barlow
Bass
Murph
Drums
WRITTEN BY
J Mascis
PRODUCER
J Mascis
LABEL
Blast First

Chart the rise of Queen, from their early years to international stardom

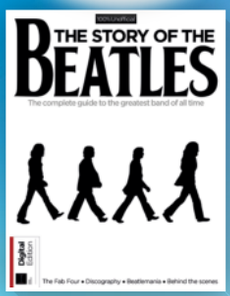


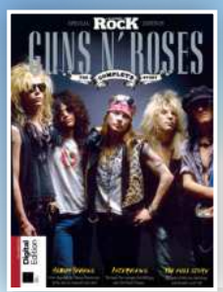




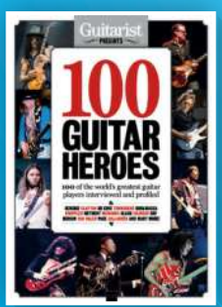


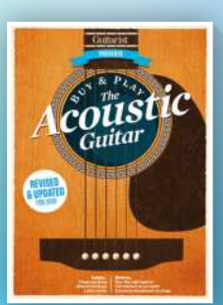
Get to grips with the guitars that have made the Gibson name immortal

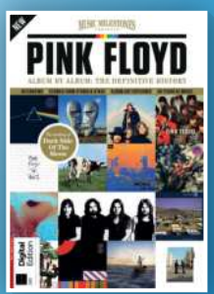




Are you ready to rock?! Crank up the volume and dive into the best rock albums ever made







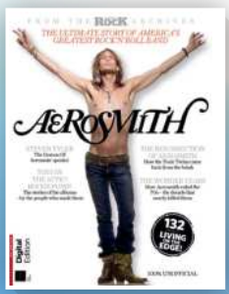
Get great savings when you buy direct from us

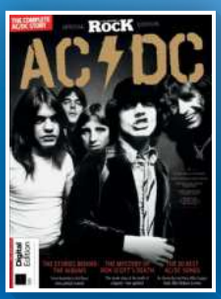
1000s of great titles, many not available anywhere else

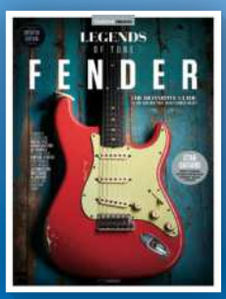
World-wide delivery and super-safe ordering

ROCK ON WITH OUR MUSIC BOOKAZINES

Discover the origins of legendary songs, relive iconic performances and meet the pioneers behind some of music's greatest names







Tune into the finest hits of the 80s and explore a pivotal decade for music

Follow us on Instagram @futurebookazines

FUTURE

www.magazinesdirect.com

Magazines, back issues & bookazines.

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE UP TO 61%

Delivered direct to your door or straight to your device

Choose from over 80 magazines and make great savings off the store price!

Binders, books and back issues also available

Simply visit www.magazinesdirect.com

No hidden costs · Shipping included in all prices · We deliver to over 100 countries · Secure online payment

FUTURE

magazinesdirect.com

Official Magazine Subscription Store

"Rock music isn't like pizza. If you say 'pizza' in 28 countries, they know what you mean. If you say 'rock', well that's everybody from Tom Petty to Metallica, from the Black Crowes to the Chili Peppers. I like it all." – Dave Lee Roth

Legends Of The '80s is a 132-page celebration of rock's craziest decade – ten years that redefined what 'rock' really was. Read the inside story of **AC/DC**'s *Back In Black*. Find out why 1980 was **The Greatest Year in Metal**. And discover the stories behind classic albums from **Dio**, Def Leppard, Bon Jovi, **Bruce Springsteen**, Guns N' Roses and many more.

Ripped from the pages of *Classic Rock*, this is the story of '80s rock – by the people who were there.

ROCK'N'ROLL AIN'T NOISE POLLUTION

BOOKAZINE

9021

9000

COVER IMAGES: GETTY